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ABSTRACT

The handbook is a service publication for teachers of French as a second language. Each of five articles addresses a specific issue. "Teaching and Learning Strategies" (Walter A. Lazaruk) reviews the four skills approach used in second language learning. A communication model of teaching, used alongside study of the language itself, is recommended. Practical suggestions are given for teachers. "Learning Strategies" (Madeleine Monod) offers a practical guide for a second language program, focusing on the practitioner in the classroom. Procedural suggestions are given for using the curriculum guides and program outlines provided by the provincial education authority to integrate instruction in the four skills. Although the specific applications given are for junior high, the principles are found to be applicable to all grade levels. In "A Guide to Evaluation in the French Program" (Douglas Parker), a brief statement on testing and student evaluation is provided, with a comprehensive review of the types of tests available, how they may be developed for each of the four skill areas, testing procedures, and the types of tests to be developed for evaluation of a second language program. "The French Language as Spoken in Canada" (Roger Motut) clarifies the distinction between academic French and standard Canadian French and explains the language variations in Canada. In "Learning French as a Second Language: Some Psycho-Linguistic and Pedagogical Hints" (Pierre Monod), the psycholinguistic theory of language learning and practical suggestions for classroom teaching are outlined, and the English and French languages are compared. (MSE)

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# FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

## Handbook

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*This handbook is a service publication only. The information is prescriptive only insofar as the content of the handbook duplicates the statement for French as a second language contained in the Alberta Program of Studies.*

# INTRODUCTION

The French as a Second Language Handbook is a service publication for teachers. This handbook provides ready reference to information deemed important for the teaching of French as a second language. The scope of the articles contained in the handbook goes beyond the Program of Studies and Curriculum Guides prepared by Alberta Education. However these well-researched articles were developed by Alberta educators to assist in the implementation of the programs. Each article is to be considered an entity in itself addressing one specific issue.

## ARTICLES

1. *TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES: W. A. Lazaruk*

   This paper reviews the four skills approach utilized in second language learning. The author recommends a communication model without neglecting the need for the study of language itself. The approach may summarize as follows:

   Language study + language practice + language use = language learning

   Numerous practical suggestions are given to teachers in applying these concepts.

2. *LEARNING STRATEGIES: Dr. Madeleine Monod*

   This article offers a practical guide for teachers to follow in teaching the second language program. What is of foremost importance to the author is the practitioner in the classroom. While the Program of Studies outlines the minimum expectations for each of the four skills of language, this paper provides many practical procedural hints as to how the teaching of these skills must be integrated. The focus is on the Junior High classes, but the principles involved are applicable to all grade levels.

*3. A GUIDE TO EVALUATION IN THE FRENCH PROGRAM: Dr. Douglas Parker*

The Curriculum Guide offers a brief statement on testing and evaluation. However the area of evaluating student achievement in a language program is of such importance that it was considered necessary to provide teachers with a comprehensive review of the types of tests which may be used, how these tests may be developed for each of the four skill areas, testing procedures and various types of tests which should be developed for the evaluation of a second language program.

*4. THE FRENCH LANGUAGE AS SPOKEN IN CANADA: Dr. Roger Motut*

Teachers are often asked by parents whether it is Parisian French or Canadian French which is being taught in the classroom. This paper attempts to clarify the distinction between Academic French and the standard Canadian French. Dr. Motut clearly explains that there are language variations in Canada. Taken in the perspective presented in the paper, variations of a language are a normal phenomenon of a dynamic culture.

*5. LEARNING FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: SOME PSYCHO-LINGUISTIC AND PEDAGOGICAL HINTS: Dr. Pierre Monod*

The theory of language and language learning has evolved substantially in the last decade. This article provides an excellent overview of the psycho-linguistic theory of language learning and also offers practical suggestions for teachers in the classroom. Dr. Monod makes an excellent comparison of the English and the French language, their similarities and differences.

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# TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

## A DISCUSSION PAPER

Walter A. Lazaruk

August 1978

THE MAJOR PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER IS TO SERVE
AS A BASIS FOR DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE TEACHING
AND LEARNING STRATEGIES THAT MIGHT BE USED FOR
SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN ALBERTA SCHOOLS.

The reader will note that the paper focusses primarily on activities to encourage language use. This emphasis is not meant to ignore the importance of language study and practice activities but to concentrate on a phase of language learning that could be developed more adequately.

Language study + language practice + language use = Language learning.

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## TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

### BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

Several assumptions underline the development of this section on teaching and learning strategies:

### 1. NEED FOR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

More emphasis should be placed upon providing students with the opportunity to use the language in situations representative of those encountered in everyday life. Knowledge of linguistic elements, vocabulary, sounds, word formation and grammar although important does not automatically produce the ability to communicate. Language study and language practice often taught through approaches which could be referred to as formal strategies need to be combined with opportunities to use the language through the use of functional strategies. The view taken in this curriculum is that exercises and activities which encourage students to exchange with others messages of real interest to them, should be introduced from the beginning of the language program.

### 2. FOUR SKILLS APPROACH

As students vary in their predisposition toward oral and visual means of learning, it is desirable to appeal to as many of the senses as possible and avoid a single approach for all students. To illustrate, some students will learn through visual presentations what they are not able to grasp orally. Similarly, concepts learned in receptive skills (listening and reading) can be reinforced through productive skills (speaking and writing). Various combinations of all skills are necessary for effective communication in the language. The second language may be introduced through listening and speaking but reading and writing should follow early, specifically to reinforce listening and speaking.

### 3. EMPHASIS ON UNDERSTANDING THE STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE

More importance should be accorded to assisting students to understand the structure of what is to be learned.

Suggestions will be made to assist teachers in presenting meaning in a situational context. Content should be sequenced to maximize reference to meaning and situation. Similarities and contrasts of form and meaning should be emphasized with numerous examples and illustrations.

### 4. INCREASED EMPHASIS ON CULTURE

Comprehending a language and being able to express oneself in a language does not ensure understanding of the social customs, the patterns of behaviours, beliefs and values of a particular society. A systematic study of culture in second language learning has been generally ignored and should be implemented.

### 5. MORE ATTENTION TO STUDENT CENTERED LEARNING

This decade has given increased recognition to the fact that students differ in aptitude, in talents, in socioeconomic background, in interests, in needs, and in styles and rates of learning.

To accommodate different student ages, experiences, interests and stages of second language learning, a variety of strategies will be suggested.

# I. LISTENING COMPREHENSION

## A. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

Listening comprehension, in this context, refers to the active process of constructing a message from sounds, utilizing one's knowledge of phonology, semantics and syntax of the second language.

A long-term goal in listening comprehension is to understand native speech in unstructured situations. In this case, occasional words and phrases may be unfamiliar but the general content of a message should be understood. A short-term goal in a classroom situation would be to understand native speech in structured or graded situations which correspond to the interests and the language proficiency levels of the second language learners.

Two levels of activities are involved in listening: recognition and selection. Recognition encompasses the ability to discriminate phonemes in French and to perceive characteristic elements of pitch and intonation. In addition, it requires students to perceive structural interrelationships among the various components of spoken utterances: e.g. recognition of time relationships, person, number. The second level, selection, focusses on the semantic or meaning features of utterances. That is, what are the elements that express the purposes of the speaker or what is it that the learner wishes to extract from the communication?

As the necessity of speed in comprehending auditory signals distinguishes this skill from the other three, effective development of the listening skill demands exposure to a variety of situations ranging from listening to the teacher's voice, other students, films, plays, to radio and television broadcasts, face-to-face encounters with native speakers, and lectures.

## B. STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Wilga Rivers proposes four stages of development that describe the listening skill:[1]

### 1. IDENTIFICATION

This stage involves the discrimination of sounds and discrimination of the elements of meaning conveyed by stress, pitch and intonation.

### 2. IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION WITHOUT RETENTION

This stage includes listening for the pleasure of comprehension, and extracting meanings, without attempting to demonstrate comprehension through the active use of language.

Simple plays, conversations, simulated telephone conversations which depict everyday situations and common, repetitious speech of conversation should be presented to develop listening comprehension at this level.

### 3. IDENTIFICATION AND GUIDED SELECTION WITH SHORT-TERM RETENTION

At this stage, students are asked to demonstrate their comprehension in some active ways such as by responding through a physical action, in writing, or in speaking.

### 4. IDENTIFICATION, SELECTION AND LONG-TERM RETENTION

Students are asked to demonstrate comprehension or use of auditory material after the listening exercise or to engage in some activity which requires recall of material previously learned.

---

[1] W.M. Rivers. *A Practical Guide To The Teaching of French*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975, page 93.

## C. SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

### 1. MINIMAL PAIR EXERCISES

These exercises are useful in helping students distinguish among isolated sounds and sounds in the context of words.

For instance, ask students to listen to a series of sounds and indicate whether they are the same or different:

| | Same | Different |
|---|---|---|
| vous/vue | ☐ | ☒ |
| tu/vu | ☒ | ☐ |

### 2. EXECUTING COMMANDS

Ask students to listen to a series of commands and perform each as quickly as possible: e.g. *Levez-vous. Asseyez-vous. Levez la main droite.*

### 3. USE OF VISUALS

a. Ask students to draw a picture or to follow the directions on a map on the basis of instructions given in French by the teacher.

b. Ask students to identify the letter which corresponds to the picture best representing what they hear.

*Pictures are most appropriate at the elementary level.*

### 4. DICTATION

Ask students to fill in the blank spaces of a written passage which is read to them or ask students to write out an entire passage which they hear.

Suggested guidelines for giving dictations are:

a) Ask students to listen to a passage read at normal speed by the teacher or on tape.

b) Repeat the reading in meaningful segments with pauses for the students to write.

c) Finally, reread the passage at normal speed in order that students may check or correct their work.

## 5. INFORMATION SEARCH

Given a series of questions to students beforehand, ask them to listen to a sequence of sentences and write down only the segments which answer the questions provided.

Give the passage orally several times to allow students to answer specific questions in writing.

## 6. USE OF RECORDED MATERIAL

a) Ask students to extract the major ideas from a recorded message or from a radio announcement.

b) At an advanced level, ask students to paraphrase orally or in writing rapid speech or a dialect or take notes to summarize the principal ideas of a recorded passage.

TEACHERS ARE ASKED TO REFER TO *A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE TEACHING OF FRENCH* BY WILGA RIVERS, AND *CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES: FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (SECOND EDITION)* BY EDWARD D. ALLEN AND REBECCA M. VALETTE WHO PROVIDE AN EXCELLENT LISTING OF ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPING LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILLS.

## II. SPEAKING

### A. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

It is the view of this section that students should be encouraged to express themselves freely in French in the early stages of experience with the language by using the structures and vocabulary they have been learning through an orderly progression of study and practice.

Secondly, speaking skills should be developed in a situational context. To establish this context, interest centres should reflect concrete situations in the student's immediate environment or in environments at their interest level in a French-speaking milieu. At beginning levels, topics such as polite expressions, greetings, introductions, identification of objects and persons, comparison of persons, places and things, and general health lend themselves to exploration.

At an intermediate level, the above topics may be further developed using more extensive vocabulary and structures. Discussion about sports or social life, conversations dealing with specific topics such as shopping, farm life, and news can be undertaken.

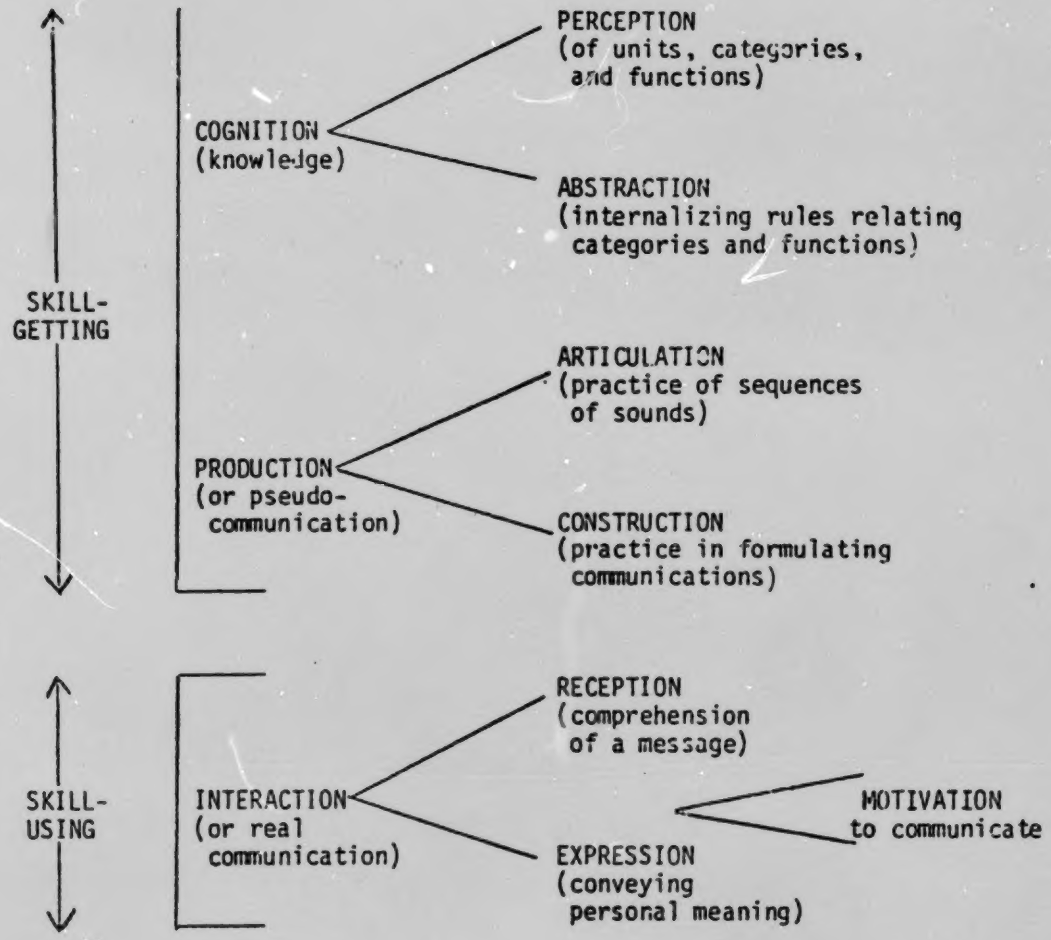
At advanced levels, interpretation of reading selections, relating stories from the point of view of individual characters, improvised dramatization and reporting on radio and television are some suggested topics.

### B. A MODEL OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

It is important for the teacher to distinguish between skill acquisition and skill production. Wilga Rivers has developed a model for language learning which includes all skills and which distinguishes two major aspects of language learning: "skill-getting" and "skill-using". In River's definition, "skill-getting" encompasses cognition, which is the perception and abstraction of a new language system or the formation of one's mental blueprint. "Skill-getting" is achieved when articulation and construction based on cognition form production or pseudocommunication.

In her model "skill-using" depends upon motivation to communicate, which in turn, leads to reception, expression and interaction or communication. River's model of language learning to describe the processes involved in learning to communicate is summarized as follows:[2]

TABLE 1


SKILL-GETTING
COGNITION (knowledge)
PERCEPTION (of units, categories, and functions)
ABSTRACTION (internalizing rules relating categories and functions)
PRODUCTION (or pseudo-communication)
ARTICULATION (practice of sequences of sounds)
CONSTRUCTION (practice in formulating communications)
SKILL-USING
INTERACTION (or real communication)
RECEPTION (comprehension of a message)
EXPRESSION (conveying personal meaning)
MOTIVATION to communicate

---

[2] Ibid., page 4.

Acquiring the ability to communicate depends upon "skill-getting" and "skill-using" progressing simultaneously. Relying exclusively on "skill-getting" activities omits the motivating opportunities to communicate which is the goal of many students. On the other hand, providing "skill-using" activities not based on any acquisition of language can prove frustrating. A combination of "skill-getting" and "skill-using" activities is therefore necessary to develop communication skills. Also, "skill-getting" activities should be presented in a situational context so as to produce pseudocommunication.

## C. SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

The activities suggested are intended to enable students to attain a functional ability in which they can make themselves understood in everyday situations.

### 1. USE OF CARTOONS

a) Ask students to describe one picture or a series of pictures.

b) Verify global understanding of a series of cartoons by asking a series of questions. This may be done by the teacher or by students.

c) Engage in a dialogue with students on the topic depicted in a cartoon or have two students engage in a dialogue.

d) Ask students to imagine the thoughts of a character.

e) Ask students to provide an epilogue or an ending to a story.

### 2. NUMBERED FILE CARDS

At the beginning of a class, give each student four or five file cards with a question or a command in French on each.

At some point during the lesson, call out a number when class routine begins to lag, whereupon the appropriate student reads his file card and asks or answers the question or performs the suggested action.

## 3. USE OF DIALOGUES

a) Ask students to prepare a skit which may be an adaptation of a situation in a dialogue they have studied: e.g., two people in a restaurant become two students having lunch, or two people discussing the geography of Alberta.

b) Give students one side of a conversation which is not completed and ask students to create a dialogue. Different groups act out their versions.

Example:

*Guy: Salut, Pierre! Comment ça va?*
*Pierre:*
*Guy: Ça va. Tu travailles! Mais c'est samedi. Je vais au cinéma. Tu viens?*
*Pierre:*
*Guy: C'est dommage.*

c) Give students a response-pair beginning and ask them to expand it.

Example:

*Jacques: Tiens, une lettre du Canada. C'est probablement une lettre de mon ami Jim.*
*Monique: Qu'est-ce qu'il dit?*
*Jacques:*
*Monique:*

d) Give students a punch line and ask different groups to compose short skits leading up to it.

Example:

*Quelle horreur!*
*C'est impossible!*

e) Ask students to compose dialogues based on a list of key words which provide the basic elements.

Example:

a. *Aller, ski?*
b. *Où?*
c. *Banff.*
d. *Qui?*
e. *Monique et Jeanne.*
f. *Quand?*
g. *Vendredi.*

## 4. ROLE-PLAYING

a) Identify themes suggested by the lessons in instructional materials. e.g. *A unit dealing with modes of transportation and travel expressions may culminate in a simulated trip; a unit dealing with clothing expressions might suggest a fashion show.*

Examples of role-play situations are:

*(i) You are taking a friend to a concert. Discuss the kind of music you are going to hear, the group that is playing, the cost and how you will get there.*

*(ii) You and one of your parents are planning a day at the lake. Discuss what the weather will be like, what things you'll need to bring along, and what sorts of things you can do once you get there.*

Instructions at the beginning may be given in English but as the students advance instructions may be given in French.

## 5. TASK ASSIGNMENT

A student is given a task which he carries out and reports upon to his class or to his small group. Directions for the tasks may be given in English but the seeking of information, student responses and final report would be in French.

Examples are:

a) *Find out from a student in the class his/her name, address, favourite courses and the names of courses he finds the easiest and most difficult.*

b) *Find out from a student five things which he/she does during the weekend that are different from activities carried out during the week.*

## 6. INTERVIEW

a) Students are divided into small groups and would interview a member of the group on a given topic. The interviewer may answer as many questions as he can and then exchange roles with another member of the group.

b) One variation would be for each student to prepare five questions to ask the teacher next day.

## 7. "TOI ET MOI"

Students are paired and alternately ask questions of each other. Questions should be sufficiently varied to practise the structures and vocabulary of the lesson.

## 8. VALUES CLARIFICATION

Students are offered the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings, within the limits of acquired language skills.

Examples are:

a) *Qu'est-ce que vous aimez faire ou ne pas faire?*
b) *Quand êtes-vous triste?*
c) *Qu'est-ce que vous feriez si ....?*

## 9. REACTIONS

Students are given a situation and are asked to indicate their reaction by completing the sentences.

Examples are:

*a) Quand je suis seul(e) à la maison, je ....*

*b) Quand il neige, ....*

## 10. USE OF INEXPENSIVE MATERIAL

a) Use a felt board with cutout figures to illustrate a story being related.

b) Encourage students to look for advertisements, cartoons, and pictures to apply the expressions they have learned.

c) Use maps and a variety of pictures as a basis for asking and answering questions or giving directions.

d) At a more advanced level, ask students to produce a mock radio program to include proverbs, musical selections, interviews, jokes and commercials.

TEACHERS CAN FIND NUMEROUS IDEAS TO STIMULATE ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN THESE SOURCES:

1. ALLEN, EDWARD D. AND REBECCA M. VALETTE. *CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES: FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE.*
2. JARVIS, G. ET AL. *CONNAÎTRE ET SE CONNAÎTRE.*
3. PAPALIA, ANTHONY. LEARNER-*CENTERED LANGUAGE TEACHING: METHODS AND MATERIALS.*
4. STANISLAWCZYK, I. ET AL. *CREATIVITY IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM.*

# III. READING

## A. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

Reading can be defined as the process of extracting meaning from a written script or the following of written sequences rapidly for comprehension. This skill is usually performed silently while the eye scans whole groups of words or sentences at a time. Another definition of reading is the pronunciation of phrases and sentences of written symbols, a definition which is applicable primarily at an early stage of language learning.

In the teaching of reading, a short pre-reading period is suggested in which students become accustomed to French sounds. The pre-reading training is intended to teach students to cope with the critical French phonemes. Otherwise, garbled communication may be the result as students often assume that French letters represent English sounds. However, learning to identify and articulate problem sounds will enable students to read the French language as a logical representation of the newly acquired sounds.

In selecting reading activities, teachers are asked to consider the natural uses of reading. People read for information, for instructions to perform some task, to find out the time, location of some event and availability of something by consulting timetables, programs, announcements, census and advertisements. Other natural uses of reading are for enjoyment and excitement found in novels, short stories, poems, and songs and to find out what is happening or what has happened by consulting newspapers, magazines and reports.

## B. STAGES OF READING DEVELOPMENT

W. River recommends six stages of reading development to enable students to develop progressively their ability to read more and more fluently and independently, materials of increasing difficulty.

## 1. INTRODUCTION TO READING

Major emphasis is placed on identifying sound-symbol correspondences in order that students may perceive in graphic form meanings they have learned orally.

Students learn to read what they can say.

At this stage, reading is integrated with each skill:

a) Listening: identification and recognition in graphic form of the structure groupings of an oral message.

b) Speaking: recognition in graphic form of the graphic symbols for the oral utterance practised.

c) Pronunciation and intonation: practising correct productions of sounds and appropriate phrasing.

d) Writing: consolidating sound - symbol association through dictations or spot dictations or copying out, with correct spelling, sentences being learned.

e) Grammar: consolidating grasp of grammatical structures by seeing in written form what has been learned orally.

At this level, students are asked to answer questions requiring a recognition of familiar material.

## 2. FAMILIARIZATION

This stage involves reading rearrangements and recombinations of familiar material learned orally.

The purpose of reading at this stage is to recognize meaningful segments of thought, and read in coherent word groupings.

Students are asked to supply answers to questions which force them to recombine known elements in new combinations.

## 3. ACQUIRING READING TECHNIQUES

At this stage, students are asked to read directly simple narrative and conversational material that develops an uncomplicated and entertaining theme. The readings are not based on work practised orally and introduce students to written style and more complicated structure. Vocabulary is largely in the area of the known. Meanings of new vocabulary can be deduced from illustrations, cognates and from context.

Students would be expected to answer questions on content in response to *Qui? Quoi? Quand? Où? Comment? (manner) Est-ce que?*

## 4. PRACTISE

At this stage, students practise their skill with a wider range of language which include authentic writings by French authors. These reading passages are accessible to students and avoid complex style and specialized vocabulary.

Both intensive and extensive reading is practised. Intensive reading is linked to a study of the problem areas of the French language: e.g. expressing time relationships. Extensive reading may be for information on a topic of interest or for pleasure by reading short stories, plays, short novels and magazines written for schools.

Questions at this stage should consider implications such as: *Pourquoi? Si ... puis quoi?* and *Comment?*

## 5. EXPANSION

Students begin to read a variety of materials in their original form.

Reading becomes a technique. Students learn to scan for information and to extract major ideas and arguments.

Material is chosen for the purpose of developing the student's aesthetic appreciation, imagination, and powers of judgment and discriminative reasoning.

Students would be expected to express themselves in simple correct French.

## 6. AUTONOMY

Students reaching this stage are encouraged to pursue an independent reading program in which they can explore special interests.

## C. SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Ask students to read sentences printed on flashcards and answer questions.
2. Project a transparency of a reading passage. Show the lines sequentially and discuss each for meaning. Lines may be numbered for quick reference.
3. Ask students to rearrange a series of scrambled sentences into a logical paragraph.
4. Ask students to paraphrase a reading passage.
5. Ask students to find specific information in a French newspaper such as the name, address and services advertised by a specific agency.
6. Show the first four lines of a passage on an overhead. Then ask students to formulate questions to which they expect answers in the completion of the passage. The questions are written on the board, and after the reading is completed, the answers to the questions are discussed.
7. Ask students to read a story without an ending and try orally to make up an ending which is consistent with the story.
8. Ask students to read a passage and supply a suitable title.
9. Ask students to read a passage and then list three important facts, ideas, or events contained in it.

10. Ask students to formulate their own questions on a reading selection and call on other students to verify comprehension.
11. Give students a comic strip with eight to ten frames with each alternate frame containing a dialogue and the others left blank. Students are asked to create a meaningful dialogue by providing suitable utterances for the blank frames.
12. Ask students to summarize a selection. Write key words on the board to help beginning students.
13. Ask students to draw a picture which illustrates what they had read.
14. Provide a checklist for discussion and ask students to discuss and review selections read with other students.

## IV. WRITING

### A. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

Writing can be defined as a graphic representation of sound combinations; it is an abstraction with an arbitrary relationship to the sounds and thoughts it represents.

Writing is often considered to be the most difficult of the language skills. Many people tend to be very critical of errors in spelling and written errors in grammar.

Development of the writing skill is interrelated with the other skills as writing requires that students read or see what they are writing, often pronounce what they are writing, and during dictation transcribe what they hear. Development in listening, speaking and reading lays the groundwork for development of the writing skills.

An early introduction to writing is suggested in order to help bypass the fact that many students invent their own spelling system in an attempt to "retain" the text they are hearing. In addition, writing tends to increase retention and makes available a source for later reference. In addition, it provides students with physical evidence of their achievements and becomes a means by which they can measure improvement. John B. Caroll indicates that "materials presented visually are more easily learned than comparable materials presented aurally".[3] It can be suggested that writing contributes to a visual presentation. Another fact in verbal learning from the same source is as follows:

> "The more numerous kinds of association that are made to an item, the better are learning and retention. Again this principle seems to dictate against the use of systems of language teaching that employ mainly one sensory modality, namely, hearing".[4]

Before introducing students to writing, be sure that the students are able to hear the sounds of the French and to pronounce them aloud when they see them. Also, they should have a basis in vocabulary, and be able to comprehend the grammatical structures that they will be using in writing.

## B. STAGES OF WRITING

Rivers identifies five stages of writing in a systematic development of the writing skill.

### 1. COPYING

Students copy written models as a means to learn some of the conventions of the language and as a means of overcoming the interference of native language habits.

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[3] John B. Caroll, "The Contribution of Psychological Theory and Educational Research to the Teaching of Foreign Languages," in *Trends in Language Teaching*. A. Valdman, et. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966, p. 105).

[4] *Idid.*, p. 105.

## 2. REPRODUCTION

Students reproduce in writing (without copying) work learned orally and then read.

Firstly, students reproduce material they have copied. Then, students reproduce in dictation sentences that have been memorized, read and copied.

## 3. RECOMBINATION

Students reproduce with minor adaptations work learned orally or read. Actual recombination should involve only known elements.

Writing at this stage requires an ability to manipulate grammatical structures and a knowledge of the intricacies of representing graphically what the student is required only to recognize in reading. Generally, students would be required to make one change at a time.

## 4. GUIDED WRITING

While writing at this stage is highly structured and teacher-directed, students will be given some freedom in the selection of lexical items and structural patterns within the limits of their knowledge of the language.

## 5. COMPOSITION

At this stage, students select vocabulary and structures to express personal meaning.

It is suggested that students concentrate on developing a simple, lucid form of expression that would be acceptable to a native speaker.

## C. SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Ask students to copy sentences or segments of work learned orally. The student repeats to himself what he is writing.
2. As an aid to memorization, ask students to copy and repeat a phrase, then repeat the phrase several more times without reference to the script.
3. Ask students to reproduce without a copy, sentences that they have learned to copy.
4. Ask students to write dictations based on utterances learned orally or to concentrate on the spelling of difficult words through spot dictation.
5. Give spot dictations to focus on important grammatical points: tense endings, sounds and adjective agreements.
6. Ask students to write a learned phrase in response to a question that the teacher is asking or as a description of a picture he is showing.
7. Ask students to unscramble words, individual sentence or sentences in a dialogue or narrative and to think of the meaning being reproduced.
8. Ask students to write out structure drills, expanding, contacting and transforming sentences or substituting words within the limits of learned work.
9. Ask students to write out recombinations of sentences centering around a theme provided by a visual or a series of visuals. The theme must represent a situation for which the students have learned vocabulary and structures.
10. Ask students to write dictations which recombine dialogues and narratives learned previously.
11. Ask students to complete sentences where part of a sentence or series of words provides the cue establishing the structure to be used: replacement, expansion, substitution.
12. Ask students to answer questions on a text that they have either read or heard, using a previously read story as a framework.
13. Ask students to rewrite a story by changing the time, person, or varying the settings or personalities.
14. Ask students to write a paragraph or a story from an outline presented or from a list of key words.

15. Ask students to write descriptions, narratives and summaries of work read or discussed orally.
16. Ask students to write personal or business letters after learning the appropriate conventions.

## V. CULTURE

### A. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

Several definitions have been advanced to describe culture. Culture may refer to a people's achievements and contributions to civilization in such fields as art, music, literature, architecture, technology, science and philosophy. Culture may also refer to the behavioural patterns or life styles of people. According to Edward Allen and Rebecca Valette, the study of behavioural patterns and life styles would focus on when and what people eat, how they make a living, the way they organize their society, the attitudes they express toward friends and members of their families, how they act in different situations, what expressions they use to show approval and disapproval, the traditions they must observe and other elements.[5] Allen and Valette present the view that the above two definitions are interrelated and linked by a set of commonly shared values and cultural themes.

As culture is a complex and dynamic phenomenon, Allen and Valette suggest that each country possesses a myriad of subcultures and that the international expansion of technology and communication creates rapid transformations in daily life patterns. For instance, it can be intimated that no one Canadian culture exists but rather that several versions of Canadian culture make up this country ranging from rural to suburban, from French to English, from blue-collar to white-collar, from teen to elderly and so on.

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[5] Edward David Allen and Rebecca Valette. *Classroom Techniques: Foreign Languages and English as a Second Language*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1977, page 325.

In preparing cultural activities, teachers might aim at increasing awareness of the French culture; stimulating student interest in the study of the second language; developing student's ability to function in the French culture; and establishing an understanding of linguistic and cultural referents, cultural values and attitudes.[6]

One of the most important concepts that students should develop in their study of a second culture is that people respond to life's needs in a variety of ways. One way may work best for some Canadians, alternate ways may be accepted by other Canadians and other peoples may adopt different means to deal with life's needs.

Allen and Valette caution teachers to avoid generalization from too little data. To quote:

"It is essential, therefore, to discuss the way people live in big cities as well as in small country villages, the reactions of young people and those of their elders, the points of view of different ethnic groups, the attitudes of people in different socio-economic strata and in different regions."[7]

## B. SIX MAJOR THEMES IN CULTURE

According to Anthony Papalia, six principal themes emerge in the study of culture:[8]

### 1. CONVENTIONALITIES

The assumption proposed is that no right or wrong way exists in handling conventionalities; there are only different ways.

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[6] *Ibid.*, page 326.

[7] *Ibid.*, page 327.

[8] Anthony Papalia. *Learner-Centered Language Teaching: Methods and Materials.* Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers Inc. 1976. Pages 120-122.

In dealing with conventionalities, students would be expected to recognize and identify appropriate reactions of members of a culture in specific social situations and to understand the concept of a way of living.

Papalia suggests several topics for comparative analysis:[9]

1. Greetings
2. Introduction
3. Farewells
4. Patterns of politeness
5. Eating
6. Shopping
7. Travelling
8. Public and professional services
9. Sports and games
10. Hobbies
11. Vacation
12. Holiday and celebrations
13. Parks and playgrounds
14. Vacation areas
15. Movies and theatres
16. Telephoning
17. Dating
18. Attitudes toward time
19. Norms of discipline

## 2. ROLE OF THE FAMILY IN SOCIETY

The assumption in this theme is that traditions influence cultural behaviour.

In the study of this theme, students would be expected to recognize, distinguish, and interpret the basic structure of family units, and to identify interrelationships between the family structure and education, religion, government, and economics.

Topic of study would include:[10]

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[9] A. Papalia, page 120.

[10] *Ibid.*, page 121.

a. Stability of the family.

b. Relationship of family members to each other, and to persons outside the family.

c. Participation of members of the family in the life of society.

d. Effects of the family structure on education, religion, government, and economics.

3. ROLE OF EDUCATION IN SOCIETY

The assumption proposed is that formal and informal education is a vital part of society.

Objectives in this category would be to identify and to interpret the value of education to the individual; to recognize and interpret the relationship between student and teacher; to analyze interrelationships between church, state, and education; and to recognize the role of extracurricular activities.

Topics for comparative analysis include:[11]

a. Types of schools
b. Curricula
c. Composition of student population
d. Attitudes toward learning
e. Roles of church and state in education
f. Teacher-student relationships
g. Participation of students and teachers in student
h. Government and other school activities.

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[11] *Ibid.*, page 121.

4. ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN SOCIETY

The assumption proposed is that students should be aware of the existence of forms of government and their functions.

5. INFLUENCE OF GEOGRAPHY, CLIMATE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES ON THE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY

The assumption made is that the life styles in a country or region are affected by the geography, climate and natural resources.

In studying this theme, students would be expected to:

a. acquire specific facts about the geography, climate, etc.,
b. identify the social and economic life of a particular region,
c. analyze facts and formulate a concept of the way of life.

Topics would include regionalism, crops, industry, work opportunities for men, women and children, and the economic levels of society.

6. ROLE OF THE ARTS AND SCIENCES AND THEIR IMPACT ON WORLD CULTURES

The assumption proposed is that students should develop a knowledge and if possible, participate in the art, music, dance, literature, and folklore of the second language culture.

Students would be expected to develop an understanding of architecture and art and their interrelationships with economic status and aspirations, available resources and climate and the religious feelings of members of the culture.

C. SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Create a "cultural island" in the classroom by bringing to class and decorating the room with objects that students can see, touch, smell

and taste: advertisements, announcements, coins, tickets, perfume, candy, bread and regional and holiday specialties.

2. Use films to introduce specific concepts followed by comparison and contrast with local customs. Also, ask students to watch out for culturally significant body language: gestures, handshakes, embraces, facial expressions.
3. Arrange visits to agencies and regions in the province where French is spoken.
4. Invite resource personnel to the classroom to speak on certain themes.
5. Ask students to make a collage on cultural topics such as family and foods. Ask students to describe the collage and summarize the ideas that the pictures convey.
6. As holidays occur, give information as to how that holiday is celebrated in French-speaking regions in Canada, in France, and in other French-speaking countries.
7. Make cultural comments when introducing new vocabulary.
8. Assign reports, projects and map work. For instance, students could be asked to report on the way of life, principal occupations and staples in people's diets in various French-speaking countries.
9. Assign to students questions that require library research.
10. Ask students to look for pictures in French magazines which describe aspects of the cultures of French-speaking countries.
11. Show teacher or student-made slides which are useful teaching devices to bring an element of personal experience.
12. Present culture capsules which are small units of cultural material that present some aspect of the French way of life.
13. Demonstrate or have students demonstrate an item of French cuisine.
14. Play French songs during class changes or during unassigned time.
15. Teach certain French songs. Suggested guidelines are:

    a) Have students listen to the song.
    b) Give the text of the song to students who have had reading experience.
    c) Explain the theme and any difficult words.

d) Have the students read or repeat the song aloud.

e) Ask the students to sing the song by following the song played on the record or ask students to listen to the song again.

f) Discuss the theme and the language used in the song at an intermediate or advanced level.

g) Compare the song to songs which are often listened to by the youth in your class.

16. Demonstrate the various levels of language by the use of tapes or by reading various texts.

Celebrate Noël Le Carraval de Québec and Le Temps des Sucres with your students.

Organize an exhibition of French paintings, posters, magazines or artifacts.

Ask students to select a particular area of a French-speaking country or region on which they will do research throughout the year. Some of the topics that could be included in such a research are:

*Geography*
*Major cities*
*Industry and products*
*Government*
*Education*
*History*
*National heroes*
*Arts and crafts*
*Sports*
*Politics*
*Holidays and festivals*
*Food and/or cuisine*
*Transportation*
*Minority groups*
*Climate*
*Money or currency*
*Stamps*
*Etiquette/manners*
*Flag and national anthem*
*Housing*
*The role of the family*
*Religion*
*Regional costumes*
*Folklore and superstitions*
*Leisure-time activities*
*Weddings and ceremonies*
*Tourism/travel*
*Marketing, shopping*

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# LEARNING STRATEGIES

Professor Madeleine Monod

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## INTRODUCTION

This section on learning strategies gives general procedural hints as they apply to the four distinct skills as well as more detailed suggestions for presenting, using and evaluating the acquisition of new material. The detailed suggestions are stated per skill and per grade level; however it should be remembered that skills are closely linked together.

Examples: Listening for comprehension may be accompanied by following the printed word in the text book or song sheet, so they are linked, as are listening and writing in certain types of exercises.

In order to keep this section as concise as possible the activities suggested at one level for one skill are not stated again at higher grade levels though they might well prove useful. Before entering into detailed suggestions the following general procedural tips may be of some use.

## PROCEDURAL TIPS

### 1. Listening

1.1 Listening exercises are an important beginning step in presenting any new material, therefore they will often be very short and informal. They should precede students' attempts to produce new material orally or in writing. This is particularly important at the early stages of pronunciation exercises.

1.2 Since listening exercises are generally short and proceed at a brisk pace, it is very important that, BEFORE the student starts the exercise, he know exactly what he is looking for, and the type of response he will have to make.

Example: precise instructions if it is a multiple choice such as: raise your hand when you hear "u" /y/;

identify the picture which corresponds to the sentence you are hearing,

underline the key words as I dictate, this could be the first step towards writing sentences. Students would hear the sentence they are reading and underline the key words as they are heard.

1.3 As an aid to concentration on the listening skills have students repeat what they hear at the early stages of the more difficult exercises. When asking students to show they have understood start by putting simple questions:

Example: short multiple choice with picture: C'est la rue?
C'est la roue?
Ce sont les rues?

true/false exercises (not quizzes for marks)

underlining specific sounds in exercise books.

In this way one avoids asking students to speak or write a lot to prove their comprehension in which case they will concentrate on memorizing rather than on listening and developing their concentration on the spoken language.

1.4 Identifying meaning:

Dialogues from the text may be used for audio-comprehension material only if students listen to them from the tape first. To begin a dialogue by reading it aloud means that you have lost the opportunity to use this material for listening practice.

1.5 Listening for enjoyment:

Tell students a known story or fairy tale in French carefully controlling for new vocabulary. Stories with a considerable amount of repetition are most enjoyed (The Three Bears). New vocabulary may be acted out or hinted at with the aid of the blackboard drawings, transparencies, gestures, facial expressions. Film sound tracks may be copied and listened to after the initial showing of the film which helps students to gather the global meaning. Short pertinent questions which do not give the answer away may then be used thus developing comprehension in listening. This also allows teachers and students to find out how much has been understood.

1.6 In order that the alternatives may be of value it should be done immediately as the student corrects his own work, thus enabling the teacher to interrupt the alternatives several times for correction or verification.

The most common complaint of students who are asked to listen to new material is that they cannot understand because it is "too fast"; this is largely due to their becoming accustomed to a too slow speed of speech - a natural tendency of the teacher in the classroom. In order to overcome this difficulty use tapes done by speakers other than the teacher whenever possible. Accommodate the students' complaints by reducing the amount they hear in any one instance by stopping the tape between breath groups, thus the normal speed of language is not changed and they become accustomed to listening to "real" language. Students generally prefer to learn from visual (written) material than from aural (spoken) material. Therefore listening skills must be deliberately fostered. If new material is presented first in the written form and then orally, students will be concentrating on their memory of the mother tongue rather than developing their listening skills.

Therefore take the opportunity to present new material orally and aurally FIRST to develop these listening skills.

Extending students' passive vocabulary:

So as to develop the student's passive vocabulary (the one he understands and does not use himself) French should be used functionally in the classroom, i.e. for instructions necessary for the normal classroom activities.

2. Speaking

2.1 So as to insure that all students have a chance to speak during each period divide them into A's and B's and have them read out loud to each other.

All the A's put the question (read the first line or sentence) to all the B's who answer the A's (read the second line or sentence). On a signal given by the teacher the roles are reversed. This should not take more than 3 to 4 minutes but should take place in each period especially during the initial stages of associating sounds and written symbols. It helps to develop a certain ability to produce French sounds fast, at normal speed.

2.2 In order to entice students to use French outside of school, encourage them to teach words and expressions they have learned to their parents, their brothers and sisters... their pets; have them prepare questions with: "Où? quand? comment?..." and other interrogative forms and start the period by asking students to put their prepared questions to their peers; thus you will be creating true communication situations (their own questions and their own answers).

2.3 Essential patterns to be acquired soon:

Very early teach to react by "moi?" which they always want to use in English to equate "Are you asking me?"

"Moi, je sais" and "je ne sais pas, je ne comprends pas"
/mwaʃsɛ/ /mwaʃsɛpa/

This enables even the slower learner to use French during the period and gives him/her a feeling of "speaking French".

In the same vein they should be able to say:
"Est-ce que je peux sortir?" /eskəʃpøsɔrtir/
pour aller aux toilettes (washroom) /puraleotwalet/
pour aller à mon casier (locker) /amɔ̃kazie/
pour tailler mon crayon /tajemɔ̃crejõ/
pour aller chercher mon livre /ʃerʃemɔ̃livr/

They should also be taught to say:
Oui, monsieur (madame, mademoiselle) /mɔsjø/ /madam/ /madmwazel/
Non, monsieur (madame, mademoiselle)

as it is very rude in French to say a bare "oui" or "non".

Have them learn: "s'il vous plaît, madame" when addressing you and "merci, madame" when getting an answer, their corrected paper or anything you are giving them; they should use "s'il te plaît" when talking to their peers.

2.4 All classroom situations are real, so use them for communication; the less English you and they use during the French period the faster they will be able to react spontaneously to French sound and production.

## 3. Writing and reading

Writing and reading should go hand in hand. At the early stages many learning games may be played: naming the letters of the alphabet, spelling bees, using rather than reciting the alphabet. It is useless to know it in order. Start with the vowel sounds which are spelled the same in French and English yet sound differently: "a, e, i, u, o" in that order. Using the A's and B's, the A's say a letter the B's must write it down, same may be done with words then with sentences.

Reading out loud in the initial stages is a good way to learn, without over memorization, complete sentences; it helps to associate the written and the spoken word, gives opportunity for immediate correction of pronunciation, rhythm, intonation. Frequent oral practice will make better readers (a skill which may be transferred to reading in English).

Silent reading will enable students to increase their passive knowledge of vocabulary using cognates and thus help them to read more interesting material.

## 4. Interrelationship of the four skills

It is obvious that the four skills which are so often separated when speaking of second language learning cannot really be dissociated, as an example:

4.1 Listening for understanding may, at times, be accompanied by following the printed word, on a song sheet, in the text book and then students are asked to show where there are elisions, liaisons, stresses. So they are listening, reading getting ready to read out loud and to produce a correct pattern of spoken French.

4.2 Listening and writing may be linked if students are asked to write down a missing word in a sentence, a paragraph (dictation). For this type of exercise it cannot be stressed enough that it is a very complex exercise as students must:

hear correctly differences between "on" and "an",
"un" and "une"

which entails a difference in gender and therefore agreement of nouns and adjectives. This agreement may or may not be heard and must therefore be indicated not because it is heard but because it is reasoned.

Example: un étudiant vs. une étudiante (heard)
un ami vs. une amie (not heard)
differences between "le" and "les"
"la" and "les"

which entails a difference in number which may also be heard or not.

Example: Les (heard) garçons (not heard) chantent (not heard)
Except for "les" there is no difference in the sound chain, yet it must be there through the student reasoning and applying the rules he has learned.
Les animaux vont à l'abreuvoir.
L'animal va à l'abreuvoir.

In the spoken chain, the liaison between "les" and "animaux" says "plural", so does the ending of animal (singular) vs. "animaux" plural, but "x" is an odd ending seeing generally the written plural ends with an "s" for nouns and adjectives. "vont" vs. "va" is also heard but students must have memorized the "ont" ending of the 3rd person plural as the "t" is generally not sounded: it is in this case as it is followed by "à" and one may make the liaison, however students must be familiar with this form so as not to write:

"les animaux von ta la breuvoir".

There is also a problem in hearing the succession of the two "a" in "va à" which is often not perceived by the beginning student who has not been helped to listen carefully to what is being said.

To conclude when using dictations teachers must be fully aware of the complexity of the task imposed on students: at all times they are synthesizing and must do so relatively fast:

a) hearing the correct sounds
b) grasping the meaning
c) establishing the correct functional relationships between words
d) applying spelling rules
3) applying correctly learned grammatical rules.

## 5. Evaluation

5.1 *Listening*. Understanding is verified by actions requested and done in proper sequence, by choices on multiple choices, or of objects on pictures, or by one word answers.

5.2 *Speaking*. Be ready to pick up and correct mistakes which make a difference in meaning. Beware of hearing the correct answer which you are expecting but is not being produced.

Decide that from time to time the first questions which are being put by your students will be evaluated as will the answers which they get. Forewarn students that this is liable to happen any day. Your own questions on previous units can serve the purpose too.

5.3 *Writing*. Frequent quizzes are the most effective and should be used as often as possible. They should be extremely short and corrected immediately by the student himself. Pick them up once or twice a week and collect 5 marks at random until you have marks for every one. By the repeated use of quizzes you can ensure the memorization of verbs, gender of nouns, agreements.

5.4 *Culture*. Culture is tied to the language taught and should be shown as such. Ask kids about their own observations, compare their opinions about means, family life, publicity in French and English magazines, differences in TV station programs.

When using pictures to teach concrete words try to use pictures typical of Québec or France.

To conclude these procedural tips it should be remembered that all students do not learn in the same way, so different learning styles, different learning strategies should be used.

1. Listening being essential to communicate, present new material orally (tape preferable to teacher), get the students to pick out all they can, try to awaken their imagination by questions rather than giving (feeding) them the answers.
2. Write new words on board CLEARLY (accents included).
3. Focus students' attention on new concepts, lead them to discover whenever possible.

4. Give the rule in French with simple words,

    by clear diagrams explained as you present them,

    by showing how the same concept is expressed in English.

5. Give plenty of oral and written exercises, the latter to be done at home so that students will have to "think" French or about French out of school.

6. Be ready for questions. Some things cannot be explained so do not try, show that English has the same peculiar traits which cannot be explained either.

    Example: "I am, you are, he is" is no easier than its French counterpart.

    Putting an "s" as an ending for the 3rd person singular is no more logical than putting it on the second one!

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Identifying rhythm, stress. | | |
| Teacher shows the difference between the equality of French syllables and syncopated ones in English. | Students listen and clap their hands on each syllable first of English words, then of their French counterparts.<br>Example:<br>condition vs. condition<br>restaurant vs. restaurant<br>apartment vs. appartement | Play a game the ones who make mistakes stop clapping. |
| Teacher shows that stress in French is always on the last syllable of:<br>a word,<br>a breath group,<br>a sentence. | As students listen they beat the rhythm and clap louder on the last syllable heard. | Get them to take a step on each syllable and to jump hard on the last one. |
| Teacher familiarizes student with the elision of "e" /ə/ as in: "un appartement" /œ̃ na part mã/ | Students listen and follow the text being read, they stroke out the elided "e" as they listen to the spoken chain.<br>Example:<br>Je n~~e~~ le r~~e~~gard~~e~~ pas.<br>J~~e~~ la r~~e~~gard~~e~~. | |
| | Students continue listening and without the model they anticipate the elisions, not only of the "e". | (same as above) |
| 2. Identifying intonation. | | |
| Teacher uses two types of intonation:<br>descendent for affirmative<br>ascendent for interrogative | Students listen.<br>Accompanying descending intonation either by a movement of the head falling forwards or by a gesture of the arm and hand progressively falling.<br>Ascending intonation is accompanied by a rising movement of the head or a gesture of the arm and hand progressively rising. | In order to evaluate this skill do the same things as in skill using but tell the students you are marking them. |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| 3. Identifying sounds.<br>Teacher familiarizes students with the new sound system by having them listen to tapes, records or his/her own voice. | Students listen and do what they are told to in English.<br>Contrast two sounds in isolation such as: /y/ vs. /i/ /y/vs. /u/, /a/vs/e/ and ask students to show one finger if it is one sound or two if it is the other.<br>Write the equivalent forms of those sounds and ask them to point at the one they are hearing (one way of getting to writing by equating sound perceived and letters which are used in French to represent them).<br>Contrast two words and ask students to show the corresponding object or picture. | |
| Accustoming students to detect verb forms | Students listen to sentences such as:<br>Example: il a mal<br>il est mal<br>(making gestures, holding one's head, ears, mouth to indicate pain; having two arms in one sleeve, standing on one leg, touching one's feet for a long time).<br>Using flash cards have them put the actions corresponding to "avoir" under the verb written in the infinitive on the blackboard, do the same thing with the verbal forms corresponding to "être"<br>Example:<br>avoir (have) être<br>tu as 13 ans je suis jeune<br>il a froid je suis gelé<br>ils ont peur il est effrayé | Placing the expression which is heard under the correct verb shows the listening is correct and even understanding.<br>Insist on stressing the difference between:<br>Example: ils ont/ ils sont<br>il a/a// il est/ɛ/<br>j'ai/ʒe/je suis/ʒə |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| 4. Identifying meaning.<br>T. having presented and explained a set of lexical terms checks to find out whether meaning and word are in fact linked in the recognition phase. | Ask students to say how many times they hear /i/ in: "J'habite ici."<br>Students react to words in isolation.<br>Take two flash cards representing a cat and a dog.<br>T. un chien? S. Oui! or Non!<br>T. un chien? S. wou, wou! S. Non, miaou!<br>S. react to short questions in function of the picture shown (object or cartoon).<br>T."Montre-moi..." S. picks the right thing, animal or person in a picture with various "things", on the flanel board or in the classroom.<br>S. taking up the role of the T. elicits gestures by repeating questions previously heard (first step between listening and speaking).<br>Play very short dialogues with a punch line, if they laugh they have understood.<br>"Oû est le crayon? Sous le nez du professeur." | Have students listen to three words, two of which are similar and ask them to write down either the number of the one which sounds different or the numbers of the ones which are similar.<br>chat sa chat<br>1 2 3<br>Answer is either: 2<br>or : 1 & 3<br>Have a large picture with pictures representing the words learned; number each of the concrete words which are going to be heard. Ask students to number the answers to be given from 1 to 10. Call the names, not necessarily all those in the picture and ask students to write the number of the corresponding "thing" next to the number of the question. |
| The teacher uses gestures, facial expressions to contextualize meaning. | Student identifies gestures which are similar in French and English cultures and uses his recognition thereof to help him grasp meaning.<br>Example:<br>C'est un chien?<br>Intonation plus the inclination of the head to one side as well as the pointing at the picture means: "I am asking you a question on this." | |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| | "Qu'est-ce que c'est?" Accompanied by a gesture pointing at something indicates one awaits an answer with a noun corresponding to the part of the picture shown | |
| | Nodding implies agreement. | |
| | Shaking one's head from left to right indicates "no" | |
| | Using one's forefinger to show someone means: "you" heard as "toi" when addressing the person shown and "lui, elle" when showing someone about whom one is talking. | "Lui, qu'est-ce qu'il fait?" Pointing at John and putting the question to Mary, opening one's eyes, raising eyebrows and holding one's hand open reveals the person about whom one is talking, the fact that one wishes to find out what he is doing. |
| | Example:<br>"Toi, écoute!" Pointing at John with one hand and at one's ear with the other transmits the meaning in a non-verbal way. | John shows his understanding by listening.<br>Use verbs such as: sauter, écrire, lire, ouvrir, actions following the orders evidence clear understanding. |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Reviewing the intonation, rhythm and stress patterns. | Using a tape have students say how many syllables they hear,<br>how many of them are stressed,<br>how many "on", "an" ... they hear. | |
| | Have them note the difference between:<br>Example:<br>Je ne sais pas, moi. and<br>Moi, je ne sais pas.<br>Une belle enfant.<br>Quelle belle enfant! | |
| | Ask students to identify the main differences between French and English by guiding their aural observations:<br>Example:<br>In a text which is not totally comprehensible to them encourage them to differentiate between French and English vowels. | French vowels are crisper<br>"vous" vs. "view"<br>"lit" vs. "Lee"<br>"rose" vs. "Rose" |
| | Intonation is very similar, but rhythm is not.<br>Example:<br>Je vais à la pharmacie<br>(Students beat equal beats on each syllable)<br>I'm going to the pharmacy<br>(Students beat a syncopated corresponding to the unequal syllables and the stress) | |
| | Use tapes of weather forecast to compare different accents of radio reporters. | |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| 2. Identifying new lexical terms in a sentence. | When listening to a sentence the unknown word is isolated understood from context:<br>a) through the picture accompanying the heard sentence,<br>b) through the mimicry done by the teacher.<br>c) through the textual context.<br>Le chat est sur le toit.<br>(T. indicates "le toit" on picture, shows another roof on another picture and asks "C'est le toit?"<br>T. pointing her hands above her head pretends it is "un toit", draws it on the black board, gets under the table which is "La maison".<br>Le chat tombe du toit.<br>Picture showing the cat falling from the roof,<br>T. pretends to fall. | After listening the S. can choose one of three pictures corresponding to the sentence he has heard.<br>Pictures showing a boy,<br>2 boys,<br>3 boys & girls<br>a girl<br>S. hears: /il parle/ and indicates the number or numbers corresponding to the picture corresponding to the sentence heard. |
| 3. Identifying new structures in function of number and gender:<br>action: present or future role and place of object pronoun. | Je donne la balle à Marie.<br>Je donne le ballon à Jean.<br>Si je dis: je la donne à Pierre.<br>Qu'est-ce que je lui donne?<br>By answering "la balle" or showing it on a flash card or the object itself, S. shows he has heard the difference between "le" & "la"<br>Je vais à la pharmacie.<br>Elle va à la pharmacie.<br>Contrasted to:<br>Je vais aller à la pharmacie.<br>Elle va aller à la pharmacie.<br>T. asks: "Qui va à la pharmacie maintenant?" (tout à l'heure?) | Ask students to show by choosing one of 3 pictures that he hears the difference between "le" and "la" articles (Fem. or Masc.) and pronouns.<br>Drawing could adopt a graphic code whereby the pronoun is represented by a silhouette rather than by the representation of a person, animal or thing. |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| | S. answers either by pointing to person or by giving name. | S. hears the description of someone and guesses who he is. |
| | S. having become familiar with Q. and A. corresponding to gathering data on someone is asked to interview one of his peers, thereby using the language learned. To show that he has understood the answers he then presents the "real" peer of the character depicted by this peer. This may become a charade. | It could be a political figure present or past, a character from the textbook, invented by the class (la mascotte). It could just be drawn as the details are heard. |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Identifying structures and lexical items.<br>In real life. | If an exchange with pen pals has been established they also could exchange cassettes which would make spoken French more exciting. | |
| In real school life. | Students are asked to follow directions to find an object in class, a place on a map, a series of words in a text, a book at the library. | |
| | (could be used in speaking by reporting the sequence of actions necessary to find "it") | |
| | S. are given a series of questions (orally so short, in written form) which they shall be able to answer after listening to a short description, dialogue or story. | This may be used to evaluate understanding.<br>Students could also be asked to summarize what they have just heard. |
| | Students listen to a short newscast - weather, sports - lifted from the regular radio or TV station. Ask them to pick out as many words as they can and to try to isolate the ones they do not understand. | |
| 2. Identifying structures which imply time. | Students listen to sentences with different verbal forms giving evidence of their understanding of: "now, before after" by supplying the proper adverbs or time expressions.<br>Example:<br>Teacher Student<br>il mange ( maintenant ( toujours ( souvent<br>il va manger ( demain ( ce soir ( dans un moment<br>il a mangé ( hier ( avant hier ( ce matin | |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| | The same should be done with object pronouns.<br>Example:<br>Il l'a apporté (hier)<br>Il va l'apporter (demain)<br>Il l'apporte (aujourd'hui) | |
| Associating the heard sentences with the written language. | Dictation on known and prepared material slightly reorganized so as to avoid straight memorization and to develop precise hearing. | Verifies aural understanding through writing. (see the note under "procedural hints" p. 7 & 8). |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Acquiring proper rhythm & intonation. | | |
| 1.1. Imitation. | Pronounces syllables equally when imitating short utterances.<br>1.1.1. Uses the affirmative descending intonation. Example:<br>J'aime mon chien.<br>1.1.2. Uses the interrogative rising intonation. Example:<br>Tu viens au cinéma? | |
| 1.2. Differenciation. | 1.2.1. Answers questions. Example:<br>T - Il regarde la table?<br>S - Oui, il regarde la table.<br>1.2.2. Puts questions. Example:<br>$S^1$ - Il voit la table?<br>$S^2$ - Oui, il voit la table. | Evaluation of the performance of the student's ability to recognize and produce a question or an answer is shown by his production. |
| 2. Using equal syllables. | | |
| 2.1. Imitation | 2.1. Claps in hands as he repeats.<br>2.2. For long sentences counts the number of syllables by beating on each one.<br>Example:<br>Jean voit la balle.<br>1 2 3 4<br>2.3. Also a step on each syllable. | |

<table>
<tr><th>SKILL GETTING</th><th>SKILL USING</th><th>SKILL EVALUATING</th></tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. Identification and reproduction of cognates.</td>
<td>2.2. Using cognates, practice equal beat and production of French sounds. Choose frequently used words in English:<br>Examples:
<table>
<tr><th>English</th><th>French</th></tr>
<tr><td>restaurant</td><td>restaurant</td></tr>
<tr><td>construction</td><td>construction</td></tr>
<tr><td>addition</td><td>addition</td></tr>
<tr><td>division</td><td>division</td></tr>
<tr><td>liberty</td><td>liberté</td></tr>
<tr><td>envy</td><td>envie</td></tr>
</table>
Teacher will especially watch the ending of the words in which sound '/ɔ n/ in English, and /s/ in French, as well as the nasals - vowels in French consonants in English.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Using stress on the last syllable of a word,<br>a phrase,<br>a sentence.</td>
<td>Imitation:<br>Example:<br>C'est un chat?<br><br>Guided speech Student answers question:<br>Example:<br>Oui, c'est un chat.</td>
<td>Guided statements may be produced if teacher starts a sentence and the student finishes it.<br>Example: Monsieur Smith est le directeur de...<br><br>Mon école est plus petite que ...<br><br>Stress is successfully used when the influence of English is least apparent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Acquiring concrete vocabulary by naming objects or people.</td>
<td>Using questions. The teacher then the student puts questions to elicit correct use of nouns presented.<br>Example:<br>Qu'est-ce que c'est?<br>Qui est-ce?<br>Où est...?<br>Answers prompted by :<br>flash cards, slides, transparencies.</td>
<td>Sollicit oral answer to oral questions.<br><br>Ask students to name as many things as they can.</td>
</tr>
</table>

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| 5. Acquiring basic affirmative structures. | Structures can be generalized by using flash cards.<br>Example:<br>Person + verb + Complement of place<br>a ? indicates a question<br>a X indicates negation<br>5.1. Teacher puts questions to be answered in the affirmative by a complete sentence:<br>Example:<br>T - Qu'est-ce que c'est?<br>S - Ce sont des moutons.<br>T - Est-ce que ce sont des moutons?<br>S - Oui, ce sont des moutons.<br>T - Montre-moi un chien.<br>S - Voilà un chien. | Correct use of the elements of the sentence, including correct intonation, rhythm and pronunciation. |
| 6. Acquiring basic interrogative structures.<br>Use flash cards to indicate the sentence; superimpose a question mark over one part of the sentence to indicate the focus of the question. | "?" at end of sentence demands a question starting by: "Est-ce que..."<br>"?" over the subject demands QUI, QUI EST-CE QUI?<br>"?" over verb demands: Qu'est-ce que (subject) FAIT?<br>"?" over object demands: Qu'est-ce que subject verb.<br>"?" over complement of place demands: Où est-ce que subject verb.<br>"?" over complement of time demands:<br>Quand est-ce que S V<br>A quelle heure S V | Students are asked at first to answer the questions in function of the interrogative form used, accompanied by the "?" placed over the part of the sentence being questioned.<br>Then answers are given without being accompanied by the "?".<br>When the answers have been mastered, students are asked to put the questions according to the place of the "?".<br>Finally students put the questions they want and can be evaluated on the questions as well as on the answers they give. |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| 7. Using gestures correctly. | Student points at object when using "Voilà..."<br>Points at addressed person when saying:<br>"Pierre, montre-moi..."<br>Points at himself when saying:<br>"Moi?" or "moi!"<br>Prepares short skits using acquired vocabulary and sentence patterns acquired previously. Teacher may give cues, specific words or structure to be used in skit.<br>Very short skits can be prepared with the aim of reaching a punch line:<br>Example:<br>.........<br>.........<br>Quelle horreur! Mon chat tombe du toit!<br>.........<br>.........<br>"Comme c'est drôle, le professeur mange son crayon!" | Verified when gestures are used spontaneously when student is speaking.<br>Using file cards with questions read them out loud and answers them.<br>Using file cards with answers makes up the question and puts it to another student.<br>Using file cards with commands he executes them and then using gestures he gives the order to his peer(s). |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Acquiring new structures. | Students are asked to practice lab drills at home by covering the answers and responding to the cue. HOWEVER it is essential that this material be presented, explained and read out loud in class prior to home practice in order to maintain reasonable rhythm, intonation and pronunciation. | |
| 2. Expanding the sentence, using adjectives, prepositions and adverbs. | 2 teams, each must repeat the sentence they have just heard and expand it by one element:<br>Example:<br>Paul parle.<br>Paul parle à Catherine.<br>Paul, le frère de Catherine parle à sa soeur.<br>Aujourd'hui Paul, le frère de Catherine parle à sa soeur.<br>Aujourd'hui, Paul le gentil frère de Catherine parle à sa gentille soeur.<br>............<br>Ask students to produce their own sentence which must contain certain elements and must not be a repetition of anyone else's sentence.<br>Example:<br>Containing avoir affirmative and negative:<br>J'ai des amis, mais je n'ai pas d'argent.<br>Containing pouvoir, vouloir, devoir:<br>Je veux regarder la TV mais je ne peux pas parce que je dois travailler. | |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| 3. Creating dialogues. | When students are asked to create their own dialogues it requires considerable talent as well as ability in the second language. The creative element may be reduced by giving them key words around which to build the dialogue, but the threat of the second language is thereby diminished creating a better attitude.<br>Example:<br>A - ....passé....à Montréal?<br>B - Oui,.....<br>A - Avec qui.....?<br>B - Avec .......<br>A - Qu'est-ce que....vu?<br>B - .......vieille ville. | By judging this type of almost free expression one can mark for: fluency, correct intonation and rhythm, correct pronunciation and command of patterns learned and assimilated. |
| 4. Using true situations which foster true communication. | Ask permission to go to the washroom, to sharpen one's pencil.<br>Tell someone who does not know how to get to the:<br>general office,<br>the nurse's room,<br>to the general post office,<br>the municipal library,<br>the city hall,<br>a specific church.<br>Situate building with relation to each other.<br>Use cardinal points when talking about the French communities in Alberta.<br>Express in kilometers distances between the capital and where one lives, where other members of the family live, where one used to live. | |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Ask students to express their own ideas after having mastered the new structures. | Ask S. to create their own dialogues as a follow-up of one started by T., get them to work by pairs.<br>S. will prepare at home one or two sentences which correspond to what they did that morning, to what they hope to do after school.<br>Encourage S. to come with sentences which describe something that happened to them (agreeable, disagreeable, or funny).<br>Give each student a file card (numbered) with a question or a command. When class routine lags give a number and student reads out what is on his card.<br>Give students the Q. of a dialogue and let him give the answers he wants to. Then get students to do this by pairs. | Put questions to students and evaluate their answers<br>1 - as to their understanding of the question.<br>2 - as appropriateness of A.<br>3 - as correct intonation, rhythm and pronunciation.<br>4 - as correct grammar.<br>S. is asked to present a dialogue he has created with a peer.<br>S. presents a short report on some cultural topic or on something which really interests him. |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| Using speech almost freely to express daily acts and/or reactions to the world out there (family, community, school, sports in and out of school, news read or heard). | S. pretends he wants to go and visit a cousin who lives on the farm - in town - in Canada - in the States - in France He prepares the questions to which he will need some answers before he can leave. Eventually goes to (Prestige) French travel agency in Edmonton and reports to his group or class.<br>S. asks one of his peers five things that he really likes doing and reports them to the class.<br>S. finds out what a peer will be doing during the coming week-end. | Students answer Q. in full sentences showing their emotions and reacting authentically:<br>"Tu aimes les escargots?"<br>"Pouah, non je les déteste!"<br>Affective reactions are bound to entice gestures & facial mimicry. |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Developing a feeling for the relationships between sounds and written symbols | | |
| 1.1. Grasping and memorizing the sounds which correspond to the letters of the French alphabet. | 1.1. Write the vowels in disorder on the blackboard and get two teams to say them correctly.<br>Example:<br>"e" / ə/ not "ee"<br>"o" / o/ not "ow"<br>"i" / i/ not "I" | |
| | 1.2. Get the members of the two teams to read the nonsense syllable on the board, as fast as possible:<br>Example: pa,pe,pi,po,pu,<br>ta,te,ti,to,tu,<br>ca,co,cu.<br>tra, tro, tri, tru,<br>tran, tron, trin,trun | |
| | 1.3. When a verb has been thoroughly practised orally write it down on the board having the students spell it out in French letters. | |
| | 1.4. Students read out loud sentences which they have heard and said. They endeavour to maintain the correct intonation, rhythm and pronunciation developed in the spoken language. | Verification of correct intonation, rhythm and pronunciation may be done every day and students marked for the quality of their reading. |
| | 1.5. Students read silently and stroke out elided "e", unpronounced letters join letters which make up one sound.<br>Example:<br>Le chocolat de Madeleine est fameusement bon. | |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| | Students read silently a short passage containing words and structures which have been learned but are slightly rearranged.<br>After a dialogue on time telling the teacher could hand out about two lines on the time at which the Grey Hound reaches their town when it comes from X.<br>A short news item on weather could be read and reported upon.<br>- Use flash cards with short sentences to be acted out or questions to be answered.<br>- Using a transparency get a student or a group of students to find verb endings, sounds not found in English, letters which combine to yield nasal vowel sounds...<br>- Using newspapers clippings get students to find some information.<br>- Having read a story ask students to give a title. | Put short questions to be answered by "oui" or "non" on a very short paragraph indicating at what time the train will leave for the mountain. |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| Acquiring the ability to make sense out of unpresented material. | T. prepares short stories related to learned material in program. S. read silently answer concise questions on text in writing or orally. | The same type of things may be done for the sake of evaluation. |
| | S. paraphrase a short paragraph by changing the pronoun,<br>by changing the tense,<br>by adding adjectives or retrieving them. | |
| | On a transparency show the first lines of a dialogue, of a paragraph and ask students to complete it. | |
| | Ask students to read a short paragraph and to write down the three main ideas. | |
| | Give students a series of 6 to eight cartoon frames and ask them to supply the missing sentences. | |
| | Students underline unknown words, phrases and guess at synonyms or paraphrases. | Marks are allotted if true synonym is given or if a plausible substitute is given, i.e. the same part of speech. |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| Acquiring the ability to use for themselves information read outside of the program. | S. are given short weather reports, sports and political news.<br>Each group having been assigned the same text will report on it then answer questions put by members of other groups.<br>Ask students to read a story without an ending then try to have them cooperate orally to completing it.<br>Hand out a newspaper in French and then ask students to find out some information<br>1 - about jobs<br>2 - places to shop in French<br>3 - repair shops for cars, radio or TV sets.<br>Ask students to summarize a paragraph or a very short story. At the beginning give key words. | Much the same thing could be assigned as home work checked in class.<br>On test main ideas could be underlined in reading text. |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| 1.T. makes sure that the sounds are properly heard and that the students have become conscious of the existing difference between the way English uses the same letters as French to represent other sounds. | T. gets S. to write down isolated letters and other S. to pronounce them out loud. Students combine vowels (ou) vowels and consonants (on) and get their peers to produce them orally. (Team game) | Dictate short sentences where only holes have to be filled in. |
| | Students copy what is on a transparency spelling the words out loud and reading the sentence when it is completed. | |
| | Students can copy cartoon dialogues. | |
| | Dictate whole sentences but students only have to write down the missing words:<br>Mon ami habite l_.<br>L_ belle maison blanche? Oui.<br>_' ____ le chien de Jean. | Une modified approach to dictation: dictate, have students repeat, then write then read. |
| | Students can unscramble words or do crossword puzzles. | |
| | Have students write their own dialogues,<br>news,<br>commercials,<br>rimes. | Give marks for creative production and also marks for correction.<br>Double correction is highly effective and encouraging. |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| Developing the ability to write what one wants. | S. are asked to recombine what they have learned to say or what they have read.<br>Write a paragraph in another person, as if it were the S. speaking. Putting all the parts of speech in the plural when it makes sense, or in the singular if the text is in the plural.<br>Have them do only one change at a time when starting this.<br>Students prepare short reports by answering questions,<br>by starting to write their own.<br>Students write down the answer to a question heard.<br>Spot dictations are given to develop the correct spelling of grammatical points (agreements and verb endings).<br>Students are asked to unscramble short sentences.<br>Ask S. to complete sentences in which parts of words, whole words, or parts of sentences are omitted.<br>Students are asked to change one element in a sentence and make all necessary changes.<br>Example:<br>Maman voit son journal.<br>Paul et Alice voient leurs journaux. | Use the same type of Q. and situations for evaluation. |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| Acquiring the ability to write without being guided through each step: towards authentic personal expression. | S. is asked to create the different sentences composing a dialogue expressed by a series of cartoons.<br>S. is asked to relate what he is doing this year outside of school.<br>S. writes about what he will be doing during the evening, the week-end, the holidays.<br>S. is helped to find a pen pal in Québec and writes true letters to him.<br>S. is encouraged to play with the written language trying out rimes, noise poems or meaningful ones.<br>S. writes short reports on the topics of his choice such as:<br>Le Père Lacombe in Alberta.<br>Wilfrid Laurier and Confederation.<br>Trudeau's hobbies... | The most difficult skill to assess.<br>Mark for ideas<br>Number of verbs other than "être" and "avoir".<br>Number of adjectives,<br>Number of adverbs,<br>Correct syntax,<br>Deduct mistakes. |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Using gestures for greetings. | Through the use of puppets - preferably done by the students - encourage them to use the necessary gestures for greetings:<br>a nod from the S. to the T. a handshake between peers when saying "Bonjour".<br>a nod from the S. to the T. a wave of the hand to peers when taking leave.<br>waving ones head from left to right when saying: "Comme ci comme ça" or a wave of the hand. | This can only be evaluated when students feel "free" as in role playing or in devising dialogues for puppets. |
| 2. Using stress on "très bien" | Get the puppets to exaggerate this stress. | |
| 3. Using "tu" between peers and "vous" with the teacher | When addressing the teacher always say: "Bonjour, Madame" (Monsieur, Mademoiselle), as well as "Oui, Monsieur." (Madame or Mademoiselle) | |
| 4. Learning the parts of clothing. | Obtain French magazines or a French catalogue from a Department store in Québec and ask students to make up their wardrobe. This may be done through collage by groups and presented to the class.<br>Girls' fashion<br>Boys' fashion<br>Sports gear for all | Reports presented orally or in written form.<br>Dialogues showing the differences between the two languages. |
| 5. Learning about French speaking localities in Alberta, and institutions or groups or Radio and TV using French | Students could draw a map of Alberta with French names, with names where French is spoken.<br>Students are asked to find the French Radio station give its name CHFA - Radio Canada (different pronunciation from the English one). | |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
|  | Students are asked to say which commercial they saw on TV after naming the French peaking channel CBXFT.<br>Students could be encouraged to make their own commercial and present it to the class in French without naming the product which should be guessed by the class. |  |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Becoming aware of similarities and differences in values. | S. are introduced to the important role played by the family in Québec. The important role played by the father and by religion.<br>Give them French magazines such as Vidéo Press and let them find the answers to some of the teacher's Q.<br>S. become aware that children in French-speaking families are requested to be polite: not to speak when adults are speaking, help their mother and father with the chores.<br>The importance of education considered as a privilege, the support given children for their school work.<br>TV always working in many families in Québec but not always watched.<br>Why the "cabane à sucre"?<br>Imagine one "partie de sucre" in class. | Showing S. parallel scenes taken from French and English magazines ask S. to try to find out which are which.<br>Do the same with commercials.<br>Do the same with two menus both written in English. (the composition of each could represent the cultural differences and similarities between Alberta and Québec). |

| SKILL GETTING | SKILL USING | SKILL EVALUATING |
|---|---|---|
| Becoming more familiar with French culture and Québec similarities. | S. are requested to find information in the local newspaper about Québec or France. Clippings are brought to class and discussed as the occasion arises.<br>S. are shown magazines and asked to answer questions about what seems important in those periodicals, how this differs or is similar to important topics in the English media.<br>S. are encouraged to watch a given program on TV. This is then discussed in class. This listening combined to detecting cultural traits is a good exercise to discover one's own characteristics.<br>S. listen to contemporary songs and discover the main differences between French and English songs.<br>S. are shown some contemporary French art and asked to react to it globally.<br>S. are introduced to the holidays in Québec and France and shown how most of them are of religious origin.<br>Have students listen to music on several occasions until music is familiar, only then ask whether they recognize some vocabulary. Help them to understand the song, it must be an enjoyable experience, not work. | |

# LEARNING FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE:

# SOME PSYCHO-LINGUISTIC

# AND PEDAGOGICAL HINTS

Professor Pierre A.R. Monod

May 3rd, 1980

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this section, firstly language is defined, then learning a language is overviewed (first and second language), and finally, the basic differences between French and English are stressed.

These insights may be shared with students so as to develop their interest in the French language, improve their attitude towards learning of a second language and sustain their perseverance and enthusiasm which are necessary in order to attain competency in communication.

## 2. LANGUAGE

### 2.1 What is language?

Language is an arbitrary system of systems used by a group of people belonging to the same community. It is a code used by each of the members of the community to communicate desires, wishes, informations or opinions.

Language expresses, transmits and creates culture. Through the manipulation of its elements it expresses thought, enables the formulation of hypotheses, and engenders new ideas. All mankind uses some oral form of language. Some languages also have a written code which transcribes the spoken word into visual symbols.

Examples:

2.1.1. Language is arbitrary: There is no apparent logic for a certain combination of sounds to express the reality of an object: "a tree" is no closer to the thing it names than "un arbre", nor is there any logic in indicating the plural by stressing the final letter as in "dogS" /dɔgz/, rather than by a preceding change in vowel sound as in "les chiens" /leʃjɛ̃/.

2.1.2. Language is a system of systems: Language is a complex code composed of sounds which through their placement in a sentence express different types of "meaning".

2.1.2.1 *Vocabulary differences:* Lexical terms differ in meaning primarily due to the contrastive use of sounds (phonemes).

"a bear" /ə bɛr/ is not "a bar" /ə bar/
"a bar" /ə bar/ is not "a car" /ə kar/
"la rue" /la ry/ is not "la roue" /la ru/
"la roue" /la ru/ is not "la boue" /la bu/

The above examples show that, by substituting one sound for another, one creates words which mean - signify - different things.

2.1.2.2. *Morphological differences* indicate the relationships which exist between the words of a sentence. They too are indicated by using different sounds. Morphemes are sounds which correspond to grammatical variants, such as those mentioned, to indicate the plural of nouns, or the persons of a verb or its tense:

"I sing" /aj sɪŋ / vs. "he sings" /hij sɪŋz/
"I sing" /aj sɪŋ / vs. "I'll sing" /ajl sɪŋ/

2.1.2.3 *Syntactical differences* are those which deal with the order in which words are juxtaposed in a sentence. An alteration in word order would, for example, change the meaning of a sentence, as in:
"The man kills the wolf" vs. "The wolf kills the man"
The meaning of the sentence could also be changed by the insertion of a word or a group of words: "The man kills the wolf" vs. "The man did not kill the wolf".
Substituting a word for another from the same category -- a noun for a noun, an adjective for an adjective -- belongs to the vertical axis of the language, whereas syntactical differences belong to the horizontal axis of language.

Examples:

Substituting a verb ending for another, a pronoun for another belongs to the vertical axis; introducing a negative or interrogative form belongs to the horizontal axis.

The different systems into which language may be broken are the sound, morphemic, lexical and syntactic systems, all of which interplay to make up a code common to a given group of people.

2.1.3. Language is culture: Without going into the history and evolution of languages, it can be said that the growth and structure of modern languages are mainly influenced by the character and pursuits of the peoples who speak them. Whether language influences culture or is influenced by it does not seem to be as important as the fact that each language presents a distinctive view of the world. These differences may be due to historical influences, to new technological developments, to the influence of languages with high economic status, to the needs felt by the speakers -- whether it be the 13 words used to say "snow" by the Inuits, the 8 words to express the act of "walking" by the Bantu, the 2 verbs used to express the act of "going" by the Ukrainians, or the 3 colours all encompassing used by certain African tribes.

Some contrasts between the English and French languages, which share so many cultural traits, may be of interest: Animal cries are not heard, perceived, in the same way by speakers of English or French:

The rooster says: cock a doodle doo,
Le coq fait: co-co-rico,

The cat says: meow,
Le chat fait: miaou,

The dog says: bow wow, or woof,
Le chien fait: oua! oua!

The cold outdoors becomes part of the anglophone who says: I am cold, but is possessed by the francophone who expresses the same feeling by: J'ai froid.

A miser is a Scrooge to the English and "un Harpagon" to the

French; Dicken's and Molière's characters have almost become common nouns. The pragmatic approach to proverbs is evidenced by the English expression: "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush", which corresponds to the more abstract French form: "Un tiens vaut mieux que deux tu l'auras."

The single word "home", which means house, dwelling place, the cosiness of one's living quarters, can only be rendered in French by the expression "chez moi". It varies in form depending on whom we speak to or about becoming: "chez toi, chez lui, chez elle, chez vous, chez eux, chez elles and chez nous". The latter form is used in Québec by the speaker when referring to his own home in sentences such as: "Je rentre chez nous."

## 2.2 What is a dialect?

A dialect is a language common to a group of people and may be characteristic of a region. There are no good nor bad dialects. Each of them expresses reality in terms which are readily understood by the members of a given community.

## 2.3 What is a standard language?

Before French and English were established as norms for their respective nations, regional dialects - which can still be found in both countries - made communication difficult on a nationwide basis, so as rulers united their lands they, together with scholars, decided on unifying language - standardizing it, giving it norms - for administrative purposes at first and, later, for literary expression.

In theory, a standard language is a norm respected by those who have been exposed to learning it for a long period of time, to using it to develop and to expound their ideas to their compatriots. In its spoken form it follows the norms established by the scholars and the political leaders of the country. In France, the spoken language is established by the actors of the Comédie française, University professors and politicians, radio and TV reporters. In England scholars set the tune. Some socio-linguists in France and Canada are trying to defend the fact that the norm for the spoken language is the one heard on the street.

Written French and its evolution is influenced by two main bodies, the Académie française, created in 1635, composed of scholars and writers, and the Ministère de l'instruction publique. Their roles are very different.

One could say that the main role of the Académie française is to protect French, to keep it pure not only in its structural form but also in the development of its lexical elements. To these academicians time is not of the essence: but the more important to them is the quality of their work and the decisions they make. Decisions on accepting new meanings for old words, classifying old words as archaic, and accepting new ones are considered of the utmost importance. The French cult for "le mot juste", "le mot propre" (the correct word) is celebrated by the Académie française which sets perennial standards. The Ministère de l'instruction publique (the Department of Education) is a government institution, sensitive to politics and to temporary changes. It dictates changes at the lexical and grammatical levels, enforcing them by decrees. These changes may be due to the influence of traditionalists or progressists and are not necessarily recognized by the Académie française.

### 2.4 What are the different levels of language? When are they used, by whom?

In all communities, whether English or French speaking, language is used in different ways by different people. Generally speaking, scholars, professionals and the members of the higher socio-economic strata of the population speak a common, simple, correct language in their daily activities. When presenting papers or addressing the public they use a more polished language (la langue oratoire), and for less formal occasions they use "la langue soutenue". Considered further from the norm is the familiar language (langue familière) and at the bottom level the slang or careless speech (langue populaire: argots et conversation "relâchée")[1]. These categories established for the spoken French correspond to literary style and official documents (langue oratoire, soutenue), normal writing (langue commune), incorrect language used to imitate familiar spoken forms, and slang expression.

| Langue écrite | Langue parlée |
|---|---|
| la langue littéraire: la poésie<br>la prose | |
| la langue standard | la langue des discours,<br>de l'enseignement,<br>des explications et discussions,<br>des annonces,<br>soit le français parlé "tenu" distingué. |
| | le français parlé courant,<br>de la conversation<br>soit le français familier |
| | français vulgaire,<br>argotique |

LES NIVEAUX DE LANGUE[2]

Examples:

"Je ne sais pas" / ʒə nə sɛ pa/ belongs to standard spoken French and is only acceptable written form as contrasted to "I don't know" often seen in the written form instead of "I do not know".

"Je n~~e~~ sais pas" /ʒə n  sɛ pa/ corresponds to the familiar spoken French used in casual conversation. "... sais pas" /sɛ pa/ is used only in a highly relaxed situation and is common, almost vulgar.

---

[1] Vanoye, Francis - Expression, communication. Armand Collin, Paris, 1957, p.31.

[2] Cohen, Marcel - Histoire d'une langue: le français. Editions Sociales, Paris, 1967.

## 2.5 What are the variants of language due to regional, socio-economic and communication situations?

French, like English, is spoken in a number of ways. The main factors influencing spoken language are the geographical environment, the socio-economic status of the speakers and the situation in which communication is taking place.

2.5.1. Geographical environment:[3] In France there are many different types of accents: people living in Bordeaux do not speak as do those in Toulouse; the accent Provençal is different from that of Marseilles. In Canada, inhabitants of Québec or of Lac Saint-Jean speak differently. People who live in New Foundland are easily distinguished from their Western compatriots.

English people can easily place speakers from Australia, South Africa or the North American Continent. In the British Isles the accent of Lancashire differs from that of London.

When French is spoken in close proximity to other languages it is influenced by the neighbouring languages, such is the case of Belgian French influenced by Flemish, of Swiss French influenced by Swiss German, of Canadian French influenced by English.

These regional differences are apparent in the intonation patterns: the monotonous pattern of the val de Loire is almost a melody in the region of Geneva and Lyon and becomes almost syncopated in the South. The stress which generally falls on the last syllable may fall almost anywhere depending on the region.

The regional differences may be traced to the use of various vocabulary elements to designate the same item:

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[3] Malmstrom, Jean - "Linguistic Atlas Findings versus Textbook pronouncements on Current American Usage." in Readings in Applied English Linguistics, ed. H.B. Allen, 2nd. edition, Appleton Century Crofts, New York, 1964.

Examples:

A mop is "un balai de coton" in Geneva,
"une tête de loup" in Paris,
"une vadrouille" in Brittany and in Québec.

(English examples)

Syntactic arrangements may also differ from one region to another:

Examples:

I am washing: "Je suis en train de laver" in standard French, but in Brittany and Québec people say "Je suis à laver".

Syntactic organizations may be traced to the influence of the language of the foreign neighbor.

Examples:

In Geneva people often say: "Il est comme ça grand" (Er ist so gross) instead of "Il est grand comme ça." The same phenomenon can be observed in Canada due to the influence of English.

Examples:

"Je cherche pour mes lunettes" (I'm looking for my glasses) instead of "Je cherche mes lunettes." "Je monte sur le train" instead of "Je monte dans le train" (For instance "getting into" the train seems a lot more logical than "getting on" it in our cold climate.)

2.5.2 Socio-economic status[4]: The second factor influencing the type of languages used depends on the role played by the speaker in a given society or a particular group of that society. Whether dealing with English or French speaking people, it is obvious that the level of schooling, higher education and economic status are highly influential in developing linguistic sophistication, i.e. a varied use of complex sentences, concise vocabulary, clarity in exposing ideas, clear enunciation.

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[4] Hill, A.A.- "Prescriptivism and Linguistics in Language Teaching" as well as the whole section: "Linguistics and Usage" in: Readings in Applied English Linguistics. (same as 3)

Example:

In France, if someone speaks like Valéry Giscard D'Estaing he is immediately put in the category of people belonging to the "prestige group".

In England there are accents such as those of Eaton, Oxford and Cambridge or that of the Queen's court which allow you to claim a position in the higher spheres of society. Pygmalion's student could only raise from the gutter as her speech habits changed.

2.5.3 Situational context: Whether they pertain to one region or another, to a specific societal class, basic accents are also influenced by the situations in which language is used. Obviously when looking for a job or presenting a talk to an audience a person does not use the same type of language as when enjoying a fishing or hunting party with a group of friends. So the situation in which a person finds himself introduces a new source of variants which changes the standard language which is used in formal situations.

## 2.6 In what way do languages differ?

As we have seen, languages differ in the way they describe reality.

Example:

A brown dog. (the colour is seen before the animal is identified).
Un chien brun. (the animal is categorized and then a colour is given).

The sound system, stress and intonation patterns, morphological and syntactical constructions may be similar when languages are closely related through origin and/or evolution yet they are never identical.

Even when two languages share many cognates the similarity may be deceptive as those shared lexical terms may have evolved differently in each of the languages to which they now belong.

Example:

"mouton", pronounced by the Anglo-Saxon as "mutton", for a long period indicated live and dead sheep. Today, the French "mouton" carries the same meaning as then, but the English "mutton" is only served for meals and no longer runs in green pastures.

## 2.7 What are the significant vs. the non-significant differences in the spoken and the written language?

2.7.1 In the spoken language all the sound differences which alter the message, whether at the lexical level, the functional or syntactic patterns, are significant.

Example:

"ils sont" vs. "ils ont" /il sɔ̃/ vs. /il zɔ̃/
"il imagine" vs. "ils imaginent" /il imaʒin/ vs. /il zi maʒin/
"l'enfant" vs. "les enfants" /lɑ̃ fɑ̃/ vs. /le zɑ̃ fɑ̃/
The intonation patterns convey opposing affirmative and interrogative patterns.

Example:

"Il est ici." vs. "Il est ici?"

2.7.2 In the written language orthographical differences are significant, as some indicate the difference in meaning between one spelling and another:

Example:

"le saint" vs. "le sain" vs. "le seing" vs. "le sein"
(saint vs. wholesome vs. seal vs. breast)

Others indicate the relationships between nouns and adjectives.

Example:

Marie est une enfant intelligente.
C'est une enfant intelligente.

Jean est un enfant intelligent.
C'est un enfant intelligent.

Others indicate the relationship between the subject and the verb.

Example:

Marie et Paul vont à l'école ensemble.
Ils vont à l'école ensemble.

Marie et Jeanne chantent bien.
Elles chantent bien.

Others indicate the relationship of actions in a sequence implying different times.

Example:

Ce matin je me suis levée (the speaker is a female, the past tense indicates that she is speaking of something that happened), il faisait nuit (the imperfect shows a state of things which existed at that time).

In the spoken as in the written language the significant differences are those which change the meaning of a phrase or a sentence.

## 3. LEARNING A LANGUAGE

There are many theories concerning the learning of a language. The main differences deal with the acquisition of one's mother tongue and the learning of a second language in school. There is a clear distinction which must be kept in mind at the outset: the first language is acquired naturally as one develops, the second is superimposed on one's ability to express oneself in the mother tongue. We shall deal first with the learning of the mother tongue, then with the learning of a second language in the classroom milieu.

## 3.1. Generalities about mother tongue learning.[5]

While we are stressing here second language learning in a school setting, it might be useful to remember that though psychologists and linguists have endeavoured to explain, without always agreeing, how a child acquires the mother tongue, there are certain observations which can be kept in mind, at least until they are proved wrong.

### 3.1.1. Language is acquired by plateaus:

As soon as a child is born he lives in a speaking world. The adults around him use language to communicate between themselves and with him; the baby is therefore exposed to their intonation, sound and structure patterns. As the infant plays with his feet and hands he also plays with his articulatory system, producing all sorts of sounds which he enjoys. By about the age of four months he engages in babbling sounds, repeating some of those that seem to please him more than others. At about eight months old he endeavours to imitate with more precision those sounds which are produced by the adults around him, and more specifically those which entice his parents to reward him emotionally by kissing, cuddling and praising him. All of a sudden, and the age varies from individual to individual, a new plateau is reached and the child produces a group of sounds which adults recognize as language used in a given situation. (W. Schmidt)

An 18-month-old French-speaking child produces the one word phrase /dlo/ (de l'eau) which may mean, depending on the situation in which it is pronouned, "this is water", "look at the water", "give me some water", "I want to drink", "let's go to the brook". Any ot these meanings will be interpreted by the mother according to the situation in which /dlo/ is uttered.

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[5] Schmidt, W.H.O. - Child Development: The Human, Cultural and Educational Context. Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1973. See especially chapter "Man as Animal Symbolicum, pp.61 to 85.

At about two years of age the child starts making up sentences built by using different elements of the sentences he hears, such as: "Ecoute maman, les petits bazo qui chantent", where "bazo" stands for "oiseaux".[6]

At the age of four children start building up their own sentences by analogy. Occasionally a child over-generalizes when he says "my foots", applying one of the "rules" he has deducted by himself and pertains to "foot, plural feet" which is irregular. In French, to the question "Où est-ce que tu vas?", the four-year-old may still be answering "Je vas au jardin." applying the most frequent rule of conjugation, namely the three first persons sound the same. In the same way, the mistaken form "C'est mon mien", corresponds to the rule that something preceded by "le" can also be preceded by "mon". This may yield such combinations as "C'est pas ton tien, c'est son sien." Thus by progression from plateau to plateau, the child who enters school by age six possesses the great majority of the structures necessary for him to communicate with the adults of his community and with his peers. (M.J.Monod)

3.1.2 The main characteristics of learning the mother tongue:

(i) Babies develop in a meaningful sound atmosphere as they hear adults speak the language of their community to their children, to their peers, and to other adults.

(ii) There is a one to one relationship between the mother and her growing child who is addressed as an individual and encouraged to develop speech abilities from the babbling stage on.

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[6] Monod, M.J. - Personal observations of Claire Noelle Simon, 1972.

(iii) As the child becomes conscious of his needs and desires he strives toward the acquisition of the code which is shared by those surrounding him. The older he gets the more precise his vocabulary becomes, the more words he knows, at the same time acquiring the structures which he at first imitates then uses according to his needs.

(iv) Between the ages of two and six he hears his mother tongue constantly, and uses it to speak to others and to himself, thus practising the skills necessary to communicate with all the members of his language community.

We shall now see the main differences between the acquisition of the mother tongue and its corresponding value system, and the learning of French taught as a school subject. (Immersion programs are not taken into consideration here.)

## 3.2 Generalities about second language learning.

The main differences between learning one's mother tongue and learning a second language in school, though evident, are often overlooked by students, parents and even teachers. They can be listed as follows:

a) The developing infant is immersed in his mother tongue during all his waking hours; he hears it, plays with it and uses it for many thousands of hours. In school the number of hours per year during which the student is in contact with the second language may vary between 100 and 125 hours.

b) The child is highly motivated to acquire his mother tongue in order to obtain what he wants, to fulfill his needs and desires and, later, to communicate with the members of his community. However, a teenager already possesses a code for communication and often fails to understand why he should make the effort to learn a new one.

c) Parents untiringly model and correct their children; they are seldom aware of the number of times they repeat a word before it is acquired by the young ones, ("buffalo" may remain "fuffalo" for a long time). The same applies to faulty sentence construction. The number of students in a second language class impedes this one to one relationship, and modelling can never be as extensive as for the mother tongue. Teachers are asked to give as much instruction as possible to as many students as possible and so, for the sake of economy, they cannot spend much time on individuals.

d) The mother tongue used at home and by the community expresses a share culture; i.e. a system of values accepted by all the members of that language community. Thus, acquiring one's mother tongue also involves acquiring an identity as a member of a group. The second language to be learned in school imposes upon the learner not only a new culture, a different set of values, but also the use of a different sound, rhythm, intonation, lexical, morphological and syntactical systems to express much the same thoughts, at least in the beginning stages, as those which he can so easily express in his mother tongue.

e) A child learns naturally to speak without any conscious effort. On the other hand, a teenager who is starting to discover himself, to wonder what his own personal identity is amongst his peer group, and vis-à-vis his parents and community, is now faced with the arduous task of using a language which makes him sound and look - puckered up lips to say "tu" - foolish. The desire to learn French may often be counterbalanced by the fear of losing face.

f) The mastery of his mother tongue by a five or six-year-old is independent from reading or writing, from explicit rules governing the language. By the time an adolescent is introduced to French he should be helped to capitalize on the skills which he has already developed in his mother tongue. Students should be guided to discover analogies between English and French, they should be helped to make up their own rules after they have observed the repetition of certain patterns. With awareness of the different learning strategies which yield success for some students, ways can be found to breed success. People who learn by listening and speaking should be encouraged to do so; those who need the support of writing to isolate words and decipher meaning should be helped by getting the written texts; those who are able to induce their own system of rules should be encouraged to do so, and those who need rules to be enunciated should receive them. The mastery of a second language is a long, perseverant, conscious effort and students should realize that they are constructing a tool - necessary skills for expression - and simultaneously weaving a net -- all the skills necessary to the mastery of the system composing the second language -- and learning how to cast it so as to perceive and express reality in a new way, the way used by French people. The main difficulty in learning French lies in the fact that speakers of English are generally unaware of how their own language works, which impedes conscious transfer from one language to the other. From Junior High on, students should be able to analyze their own language; if they are not familiar with the terminology which applies to the systems governing their own language then the teacher of French has first to teach the English grammar and concepts before he can compare them to the French ones.

3.2.1. Attitudes and motivation: There are various motives for enrolling in French as a second language. Experience, confirmed by research results, shows that important factors influencing second language learning are closely correlated to success;

they are attitude and motivation.

The attitude of the community at large, the school and the home play an important role in determining the attitude of the youngster towards French. Obviously, if the newspapers and TV show the beauties of Québec and France, the contributions of these cultures to our own; if the child is brought to see what French and English speaking people share in the way of values; how different customs -- such as kissing good night and good morning between all the members of a family, shaking hands every time you meet someone, whether it be twice or four times a day -- enrich us, we will help him to understand rather than to classify people into stereotyped boxes. By showing the youngster how affectivity can be manifested in different ways by different people we will open his eyes and mind to more ways than one of being a full human being.

If, on the contrary, the child sees and hears negative attitudes expressed repeatedly by individual adults and the media then it is difficult for him to develop a positive attitude toward either the French language or the people who use it to communicate. Knowing that French people are the largest consumers of alcohol is one thing, but being informed of the cultural aspects of wine consumption is more important. Knowing that people in Québec are farmers or lumberjacks is one thing, but being aware that most of the University trained people are in the Humanities rather than in the Sciences is another. The adolescent will almost certainly hold more positive attitudes towards francophones if his environment gives him constructive information to which he can relate affectively.

These general attitudes are often reflected in individual motivation. The more one likes a people and the language it uses, the more one wishes to be able to communicate with its members, and the more ready one is to make the effort to master the intricacies of their language. Motivation has been studied under two main aspects: integrative motivation which is highly affective and refers to the desire one has to understand and communicate with speakers of French because one likes the sound of their language, their singers, their cooking, and their culture and way of life; instrumental motivation, in essence utilitarian, refers to the desire to acquire this tool of communication so as to improve one's chances of finding good jobs. Affective motivation appears to be the most highly correlated to success: if one likes a teacher, the way the course is presented one is enticed to work better. Some of the traits of the learner who is highly motivated to learn a second language can be isolated: when one likes what one is doing, one perseveres in one's efforts to learn and master the language, and seeks out all possible occasions to use the language whether by listening to songs, like "les chansonniers québécois", listening to the radio - Radio-Canada, CHFA in Edmonton - watching certain programs on TV, such as commercials, weather reports, hockey and football games. One also tries to speak as often as one can, disregarding the liabilities it may entail; the highly motivated learner will often forget his inhibitions just to try out new words, new sentences. This motivation can be kept up if at certain times communication is judged more important than correct utterances. Some learners speak French to their cats and dogs and this type of self-imposed exercise enables them to develop some of the automacity without which no language can be spoken. Being motivated means that one gladly accepts the challenge of learning a second language and developing the skills which ensure success. Success, perceived affectively as a positive reinforcer, can itself be another source of motivation due to the cumulative effect of mastering skills and feeling good about one's achievement.

3.2.2. Other factors influencing second language learning: Though all factors influencing the learning of a second language cannot be mentioned here it would seem that the age of the learner, his socio-economic status, his general achievement and his interests have some bearing on successful learning.

3.2.2.1. The age of the learner, what he has already learned in his mother tongue and how it was acquired influence his approach to a second language. At 13 or 14 years old the adolescent is already quite sophisticated in his unconscious language use and in the thoughts he wishes to express, consequently he does not enjoy simple situations such as those depicted in elementary reading books. Nor is the teenager interested in adult communication used in certain commercially prepared programs.

3.2.2.2. The socio-economic sphere in which he lives has developed a certain number of interests which he would like to be able to comment about in French. Sports such as hockey and football may be discussed by all youngsters but some of them may be more interested in developing the vocabulary necessary to talk about the sports they personally engage in, such as water skiing, horseback riding, skidooing. In order to awake their interest the teacher could have a series of modules dealing with the vocabulary and structures corresponding to these sports. Other youngsters may be more interested in sciences and they could be helped to find the necessary information in magazines, or other modules could be prepared for them.

3.2.2.3. Whenever dealing with these special centers of interest, it should be noted that the level of the language is highly important because if it is too difficult it will discourage the learner, and if too simple it will annoy him as he is already above this level of thought.

Teachers can help students by presenting the written material orally and then letting them investigate the written word alone.

Many a student will enjoy learning about French customs, those still in use in Québec and France. Some will want to prepare short presentations on a topic of their choice and it may be more important to let them do this in English in the first two years as it is one way of overcoming some of the stereotypes which they are often submitted to. Encourage students to relate their discoveries about the French influence, whether in Alberta or elsewhere, whether in the domain of architecture or of music, and encourage them to discover the lexical commonalities between English and French.

3.2.3. Realistic expectations: Studies have shown that most of those involved with second language learning in school hold expectations which are much too high. It is believed that by the end of Grade XII students will be able to understand French native speakers, to express themselves so as to be understood by the French speaking interlocutor, to read and write French with ease. Therefore students are highly frustrated when in real life situations they discover their shortcomings; they have difficulties in understanding what they are told, more difficulties when they wish to express themselves, and many of them blame it on the school system, the programs, the teachers.

So as to set more realistic expectations students, parents and teachers should always keep in mind the limitations which are imposed on acquiring a second language in the school milieu, namely, the total time spent yearly on the second language, the dispersion of that time throughout the year and the week, the number of students per class, the program used and the aims pursued, the teaching approaches applied and, last but not least, a student's readiness to work on his own.

3.2.3.1. Time factor: Experience and research have shown that the amount of time spent on second language learning is a determining factor in the level of proficiency attained. Assuming that a minimum of 125 contact hours is spent each year in French, this time may be spread over a semester or over a whole year. During a three-year period a total of 375 hours would be devoted to learning French. Extended over six years the number of hours would be 750. Exposure to the second language could be organized on a daily basis or fitted into timetable slots left over after determining the best times for the core subjects. It is sometimes the case that French is offered on one day of the week during the first and last periods, and for the final period of another day in the same week. It seems evident that the best results would be achieved if lessons took place every day throughout an entire year, such periods to be arranged during the school day rather than at the end of it, and for as many years as possible.

3.2.3.2. Number of students: The number of students in a class also influences the number of minutes each student will have in which to practise the second language, and to receive individual attention. Grade seven students, though more eager to learn than older children have a shorter attention span, so it becomes important to involve them more in the learning act. If listening is considered to be an important skill then it must be given in sufficient portions to insure that listening is actually taking place. If writing is to support listening and speaking then correspondence of sounds and letters, or combinations thereof, should be emphasized so as to avoid useless mistakes.

3.2.3.3. Programs and aims: Nowdays it seems that most students are more interested in being able to communicate orally than they are in writing or even in reading. Programs stressing the development of audio-lingual skills were devised to meet those ends; however, students and parents are now complaining that proficiency in reading and writing is poor. This is not surprising, since, while the same number of hours is allotted to the acquisition of French, more is expected of the learner. Class time spent in developing oral communication skills cannot also be spent on reading and writing. Students who spend most of their time listening and speaking should not be expected to do as well in skills which they do not have an opportunity to practise. However, under "student involvement" it is suggested that the individual student may develop the latter skills on his own.

3.2.3.4 Teaching approaches: Teachers are often blamed for the lack of success in the acquisition of French, just as they are for poor results obtained by students in other subjects.

The main difficulties encountered by teachers stem from the energy and creativity required to teach a second language, the necessity of adapting given programs to the age and interests of large groups of individuals, and the need for the complex pedagogical skills necessary to help students acquire a second language. The latter skills involve an excellent knowledge of French; the ability to stress the differences between English and French; enthusiasm for French and French culture which will develop a love for the language; the ability to detect different learning strategies pertaining to language learning, supported by the ability to find different ways of clarifying concepts. These are but a few of the qualities which make a good language teacher.

Most people seem to think that acquiring a second language is much the same as learning any other subject.

They overlook the fact that these other subjects are taught in the mother tongue, whereas second language learning is more like building one's car as one is also engaged in driving it. Granted some of the skills are similar to those developed in the first language, but they have to be consciously adapted to the new tool of communication. Therefore explanations should not be given for the sake of explaining but rather to develop, in the student, a conscious grasping of the system of the second language.

Example: The use of the passé composé reflects the will of the speaker/writer to relate something which happened once in the past at a precise moment. That is the way it will be interpreted by the receiver. Students should be made aware of this, even if it entails forcing them to perceive those nuances without using translation but, rather, examples of their own life.

In order to establish writing and reading skills students should be requested to work individually on these skills in school and at home. After having presented, explained and practised new material in class they should practise them at home by developing automatic responses such as: "parce que" in answer to "pourquoi" questions; they should also be able to use well known structures with new vocabulary and new structures with old vocabulary.

In summary, available class time should be dedicated to the use of the oral language in near to real communication situations, whilst reading - silent reading - and writing should be practised at home. It is a fallacy to believe that a second language can be mastered without a great amount of individual hard work. Keeping the above in mind realistic expectations might be better expressed and much frustration avoided.

### 3.2.4 Linguistic skills

The teenager who engages in second language learning possesses many linguistic skills of which he is unaware because he uses his mother tongue unconsciously to convey his thoughts, needs and emotions. The habits he has developed while communicating with the members of his community will often be transferred to the French he is learning to speak. In the same fashion, the reading and writing habits he acquired in English will confuse him as he starts to read and write French. It might be a sound pedagogical principle to spend some time during the initial lessons to awaken the student's awareness to what happens in English when he uses "dog" instead of "log", "lock" instead of "lack", "locks" instead of "lacks", "I sing" instead of "I'll sing". This awareness may be restressed from time to time as the occasion arises; it may be a special asset when introducing the new French sound, rhythm, intonation, morphological and syntactical patterns, and it could be referred to as a means of developing conscious thought about language in general and how it functions. In section 4, we shall endeavour to show how the knowledge of English may influence the learning of French and how the latter can help students to become more conscious of their own language and its intricacies. As teenagers have grown accustomed to rely on the written language they should not be deprived of the support of written French; it may often be a great help in understanding and fixing new terms and concepts.

### 3.2.5 Humanistic outcomes of language study

It may be claimed that the learning of a second language not only develops thinking abilities by exercising the mental powers, but it also opens the mind to other ways of doing things, of thinking them out.

Lambert and Tucker commenting on the results obtained in the St.Lambert Home-School Language-Switch experiment which submitted English speaking elementary school children to instruction in the French language state that:

> "It is our impression that comparing languages is a very interesting process for the children, and that this children's version of contrastive linguistics helps them immeasurably to build vocabulary and to comprehend complex linguistic functions."[7]

They further add:

> "The claim that one really gets to know his own language through the study of a second one is often made by teachers of classical languages. Perhaps we will come to attach greater significance to this possibility as more research is centered on children following home-school language-switch programs."[8]

They also found that "the experimental children seemed to develop inductive concern with words, meanings, and linguistic regularities."[9]

Another process they suspected was that there was a transfer of skills from one language to another. The children were being taught to read and calculate exclusively in French yet those skills seemed to be developed as well in English and almost at the same time. Lambert and Tucker wonder "whether ... there actually was a transfer of any sort or whether some more abstract form of learning took place that was quite independent of the language training."[10]

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[7] Jarvis, Gilbert A. - "Humanistic outcomes of language study" in The Canadian Modern Language Review, Vol. 34, no.4, March 1978, p.208.

[8] Ibid. - p. 67.

[9] Idem.

Though the experiment was done with elementary pupils who were almost immersed in French, it can be hypothesized that if junior high students are made to see how English functions in contrast with French, the insight they will gain may develop more flexibility in approaching unknown situations, and may help them to become more creative in their mother tongue. This flexibility may indeed have affective offshoots in helping learners of a second language to be more tolerant of differences and even capable of enjoying them. This open-mindedness will be an asset for the youngsters who, whether they remember French or not, will encounter many people of different linguistic backgrounds and will be readier to accept the differences which characterize them, whether they be linguistic or cultural.

## 4. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ENGLISH AND FRENCH

In an attempt to stress the main difficulties encountered by the learner of French in our Alberta schools, where English is generally the mother tongue, some of the main differences between the two languages will be highlighted, and implications for teaching, whenever they seem appropriate, will be mentioned. Examples provided in this section of the Guide illustrate and support the points made so as to help teachers and pupils overcome the difficulties of understanding oral messages in French, in producing French sentences which can be grasped by native speakers, in associating the written symbols to the sounds -- especially in the initial reading out loud -- and, finally, in producing written work which entails agreements in gender and number as well as differences in syntax.

### 4.1 Linguistic differences

Since the spoken and written systems of English and French are different, though sharing some similarities, one could start one's teaching by showing those similarities so as to develop an awareness of what known English words can also be used in French. It should be noted that this applies particularly to the written language.

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[10] Ibid. - p. 208.

Examples: "restaurant, addition" are identical in written English and French though not pronounced in the same fashion in both languages.

The sentences, "The table is red." "La table est rouge." are similar in construction; the two structures follow the same pattern.

The intonation system which transforms an affirmative sentence into an interrogative one are the same in English and French except for the rhythm and stress systems.

Having shown what is similar, one could then proceed to compare what is slightly different and end by stressing traits which do not exist in English but are to be found in French.

Examples: The consonantic system is similar but the vowel system is very different: "p,t,s" /p,t,s/ vs. "a,i,u" /a,i,y/

The morphological system while they are sometimes similar, are mostly different: "the boys" /ðə bɔiz/ "the boy" /ðə bɔy/
"les garçons" /le garsɔ̃/ "le garçon" /lə garsɔ̃/

In English, there is no spoken equivalent to the French "le, les"; "the" in the singular remains "the" in the plural. Whereas there is no sound difference between "garçon" and "garçons" there is one between "boys" singular and "boys" plural. In the written form nouns in English, as in French, take an "s" to indicate the plural.

The syntactic system is the one which creates most problems as structures vary largely from one language to the other.

## 4.2 Implications for teaching

### 4.2.1 The sound system

The French system is composed of sounds which are sometimes similar yet distinct from their English counterparts. Pierre Delattre[11] isolated the traits which basically differentiate English and French:

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[11] Delattre, Pierre - Principes de phonétique française - Ecole française d'été, Middelbury College, Middelbury, Vermont; second edition 1951. (will be referred to as: "P.D.: P.P.F.")

a) "le mode tendu" qui s'oppose au "mode relâché"
(the tense mode in opposition to the relaxed mode),

b) "le mode antérieur" qui s'oppose au "mode postérieur"
(the anterior mode in opposition to the posterior mode)

c) "le mode croissant" qui s'oppose au "mode décroissant"[12]
(the increasing mode in opposition to the decreasing mode).

The tense, anterior and increasing modes are the French characteristics; the relaxed, posterior and decreasing ones pertain to English. To clarify what differences each of these modes entails, they are further described and accompanied by examples:

a) The tense mode. (le mode tendu)

This mode implies that in French a great amount of energy is used in tensing the articulatory muscles which impedes the production of air when pronouncing consonant sounds such as "p,t,k".

Examples: papa, carotte.

A thin piece of paper held up in front of one's mouth should not move when pronouncing these consonant sounds in French.

This tenseness also entails that there are no diphtongs in French, no sliding from one syllable to the next, no nasal consonant sounds after nasal vowels.

Examples: a rose (diphtong) vs. une rose (sound is not slurred)
"jouant" /ʒuɑ̃ /

"tomber" /tɔ̃be / NOT /tɔmbe/

Last but not least, this creates the equality of French syllables which should be contrasted to the English syncopated rhythm.

Examples: a pharmacy vs. une pha rma cie
1 2 3 — 1 2 3
an/apartment vs. un_a ppa rte ment / œ̃ na pa rtə mɑ̃
1 =2 =3 =4 = 5

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[12] Delattre, P. - Advanced Training in French Pronunciation. P. Delattre Editor, Boulder, Colorado, 1949. (will be referred to as: "P.D.: A.T.P.F.")

b) The anterior mode.[13] (le mode antérieur)

This means that most of the French sounds are articulated and sounded to the front of the mouth. The proportion of anterior articulations is greater in French than in English as all vowel sounds have a "frontal resonance due to strong arching of the tongue"[14] as in

Examples: /i,e, ɛ, ɛ̃ / in "di, dé, dais, daim"
/y,ø,œ, œ̃ / in "du, deux, d'heure, d'un"

"due to strongly rounding and protruding the lips"[15] as in

Examples: /u, o, ɔ, ɔ̃ / in "doux, do, dors, dont"
Furthermore, one group of vowel sounds has both characteristics and is the most French of the series.

Examples: /y, ø, œ, œ̃/ in "du, deux, d'heure, d'un"

Even the /a/ and /ã/ as in "la, lent" which are the most posterior French vowels are more to the front than their English counterparts.

Examples: "a party" vs. "une partie"

The apical /r/ favours this frontal resonance. Compare:

Examples: "a rat" vs. "un rat" /r a t/ vs. /ra/

c) The increasing mode. (le mode croissant)

This describes the fact "that vowel and consonant sounds, as well as syllables are produced by a sustained effort."[16] One starts softly and augments progressively. It is this opening movement which characterizes French and entails that consonant sounds are tied to the vowel sound which follows them rather than to the one which precedes. In French it is the vowel which is anticipated; the consonant sound is never anticipated.

Examples: A speaker of French will therefore often be misunderstood as he will tend to say:

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[13] P.D.: P.P.F. - p. 37 - Descriptions of "modes" are abridged or have been translated by the author of this document; examples are often taken from P. Delattre.
[14] P.D.: A.T.F.P. - p. 25
[15] Idem.
[16] P.D.: P.P.F. - p. 59

"a name" rather than "an aim"
"a nice man" " " "an ice man"
"why choose" " " "white shoes"[17]

This is often the source of puns in French, as in "un nain gras" vs. "un ingrat"[18] "les petits poissons rouges" vs. "les petits pois sont rouges." Furthermore the increasing mode also explains the stress on the last syllable of a word, a breath group or of a sentence.

Examples: "il a dit" "C'est lui qui l'a dit."

To summarize: when speaking, the emphasis tends to resemble this shape: <

A good idea might be to say various sentences in English but using the French characteristics. Having examined the three main characteristics of spoken French it must be noted that they interplay. Let us discuss some of the direct implications involved in acquiring French speaking habits.

### 4.2.1.1. Sounds similar and different in English and French

Most consonant sounds have an equivalent form in English and French; in the latter case they are enunciated with greater precision due to the tenseness mentioned above.

Examples: compare: "a pipe" to "une pipe"
"tea" to "thé"
"a cougar" to "un cougar"
(no air is released)

Sounds such as /ŋ/ heard in "accompagne" are similar to those found in English though their distribution - their place in the spoken language - is not the same. Students can be asked to pay attention to the sound in "onion" and then to say "oignon", "montagne", "campagne". In English, nasal vowel sounds are followed by a nasal consonant; NOT in French in which tenseness makes them ONE sound, a vowel sound ONLY.

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[17] P.D.:P.P.F. - p. 38

[18] P.D.:P.P.F. - p. 39

Examples: "a long line vs. "long" /lɔ̃/
"a blank" vs. "blanc" /blɑ̃/

Compare: "ingenuous" to "ingénieux" /in-ˈjen-ye-wes/
to /ɛ̃-ʒe-njø/
"monstrous" to "monstrueux" /mɔnstrəs/
to /mɔ̃stryø/

In cases such as "bon" (nasal vowel /ɔ̃/) which becomes "bonne" (denasalized vowel sound followed by a consonant sound /ɔn/) students are often confused in auditory discrimination and in pronouncing them. This was the source of the misunderstanding of "bonne idée" which was taken to be "bonny day!" by a student who tried her best to work on sound analogies.

Certain vowel sounds exist in English and in French, however in French they are pronounced more to the front of the mouth (raised tongue, rounded lips):

Examples: /o/ in "moto" in contrast with "motor"
/u/ in "doux" in contrast with "do"
/a/ in "chat" in contrast with "cat"

Others, as we have seen, are typically French and students must get a lot of practice in listening to them, differentiating them before they can produce them systematically. Previously acquired speech habits make it difficult to distinguish the sounds in "lu", "loup", "lit" which in certain cases are very close to each other. In their production they also involve greater concentration on tight articulation and rounding of lips. Get students to join with you in making faces and laughing with you so that they lose their inhibitions, and then work on minimal pairs to develop audition, then production.

Examples of minimal pairs:
"bout/bu", "vous/vu", "loup/lu" with variants
"bout/vous", "bu/vu", "doux/tu", "tout/doux"

In order to help students to pronounce /y/ start by using consonant sounds pronounced in front of the mouth. Get students to round and protrude their lips before pronouncing the consonant sound which precedes the vowel.

Examples: "bu" - step one: round and protrude lips for "u" /y/
- step two: pronounce "b" and "u" will be in the right place. /by/

Start the exercise with: "tu, su, du, chute, nu, mur, zut", always preparing for "u" when saying the consonant. The vowel sound in "heure, soeur" is very similar to the one students use in "sir". Show them how not to slur it; get them to "keep it neat".

Contrast /œ/ in "heure" to /ø/, in "eux" a typical French sound often confused with /ə/ in "le". Many exercises should be done to help students discriminate between:

Examples: "de", "deux", "d'heure".

Semi-vowel sounds exist in English and French; they share /w/ in "water" and "oui". No wonder our students initially confuse "oui" and "we". They also share /j/ as in "yes", but in French they are tenser. Compare:

Examples: "a radio" to "une radio" /ra djo/
"un pied" /pje/ to "plier" /pli je/

French has one more semi-vowel which does not exist in English: /ɥ/ as in "puis"

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Examples: | "la pluie" | /la plɥ i/ |
| | "le bruit" | /lə brɥ i/ |
| | "l'huile" | /lɥ il/ |
| | "la nuit" | /la nɥ i/ |

The unstable "e" [19] /ə/ (le "e" caduc) resembles "the open "eu" /œ/ of "soeur" but unlike the open "eu" it is not stable: it can often be dropped out of the pronunciation entirely."

"The main law that governs the dropping or the retaining of /ə/ is very simple.... the articulation of three contiguous consonants in the same syllable is difficult and therefore avoided in normal speech."[20] The dropping of the /ə/ "does not depend on the number of consonants that follow it, but essentially on the number of consonants that precede it."

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[19] P.D.: A.T.F.P. - p. 35

"LAW: /ə/ followed by one or more consonants is dropped when it is preceded by only one consonant, but it is retained when it is preceded by two or more: "samedi" /səmdi/, but "vendredi" /vadrə di/."[21]

In the initial months, pay special attention to the rhythm in French of words and phrases. End syllables on vowel sounds "un-peu-d'lait"; "un-bo-lde-lait"

Examples: Un matin d~~e~~ pluie - Un jour de pluie
En c~~e~~ moment - Par ce fleuve
Une grand~~e~~ femme - Une pauvre femme
Un~~e~~ spécialité - Notre spécialité
Nous caus~~e~~rons - Nous causerions[22]

"There are three "frozen groups" that retain their first /ə/ wherever they are: "je ne" /ʒə n/, "ce ne" / sə n/, "de ne" /də n/.

There are two "frozen groups" that retain their second /ə/ wherever they are: "ce que" /skə/ "je te" /ʒtə/.[23]

### 4.2.1.2 Intonation, Rhythm, and Stress

Apart from sounds, intonation, rhythm and stress contribute to the efficient decoding of a message by the receiver. When these are too distinct from the patterns used in the mother tongue the learner will have difficulty in hearing them and in reproducing them, which will then complicate communication with native speakers of French.

Intonations between English and French are similar in that both use a rising intonation to transform a statement into a question:

Examples: You are going to see Paul? ↗
Tu vas voir Paul?

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[20] - P.D.: A.T.F.P. - p.45.
[21] - Ibid. - pp. 48-50.
[22] - Ibid. - p. 47.
[23] - Ibid. - p. 51.

Encourage students not to use this interrogative intonation when repeating affirmative statements.

Rhythm and stress though carrying little meaning in themselves - mostly affective - make the message comprehensible or obscure to the native speaker receiving it:

| Examples: | English | French |
|---|---|---|
| | a restaurant<br>(syncopated) | un restaurant<br>(equal syllables) |

In summary then, it can be said that in order to acquire French speech habits students must be made aware, either through guided listening or by simple explanations, of their own listening and speaking habits so as to be able to use those traits which are similar and strive to acquire those which are different.

### 4.2.1.3 Role of sounds

Beyond the initial stages of identification and retention, when listening for comprehension students, having acquired the habit of distinguishing sounds, must be drilled in picking up those which make differences at the grammatical level as this is the backbone of meaning. They must be able to distinguish between the feminine and the masculine; the singular and the plural; the present, the past or the future of actions.

Exercises for comprehension may range from simply indicating by a sign - raising one finger for the singular, two for the plural - to answering simple, then more complex questions, thus proving their understanding.

Example of a simple progression:

Teacher: Les garçons mangent.
Pupils: raise 2 fingers indicating plural.
Teacher: Ils boivent ou il boit?
Pupil: Ils boivent.

Teacher: Qui sont les garçons?
Pupil: Ce sont Paul et André.

In this fashion students will learn how to concentrate on perceiving sounds relevant to meaning.

It is difficult for speakers of English to become aware of how gender and number are differentiated in French as:

a) English has no feminine, generally, for things,
b) English adjectives do not agree in number,
c) English indicates the plural in a different fashion than French.

Examples: NOUNS - Gender:

"a child" becomes "une enfant" (Marie)
"un enfant" (Paul)

NO gender indication in English, but one in French through the preceding determiner. The difference is heard and seen.

| NOUNS - number: | English | French | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Singular | a boy /ə bɔj/ | un garçon | /œ̃ garsɔ̃/ |
| Plural | boys /bɔjz/ | des garçons | /de garsɔ̃/ |

Observe carefully the source of your pupils' difficulties:

English: there is NO plural indefinite article, the plural is heard /z/ at the end of the noun.

French: the indefinite article changes from "un" /œ̃/ to "des" /de/; a /z/ sound is heard between "des" and the following noun if it starts by a vowel, BUT there is no sounded /z/ or any of its variants at the end of the plural noun if it is not followed by an adjective starting with a vowel sound.

It demands ingenuity and concentration to trace the signs of the plural of nouns in French.

Only in certain cases does one perceive the difference between the singular and the plural:

Example: "un animal" /œ̃ na ni mal/, "des animaux" /de za ni mo/ show students that this also happens in English with words such as: "child" vs. "children".

ADJECTIVES - Gender:

The oral agreement of adjectives obviously is another difficulty as they are invariable in English.

| | English | French |
|---|---|---|
| Singular | the big girl<br>/ðə big gɪʳl/ | la grande fille<br>/la grɑ̃d fij/ |
| | the big boy<br>/ðə big bɔj/ | le grand garçon<br>/lə grɑ̃ garsɔ̃/ |

To "the" correspond "le" and "la";
To "big" invariable correspond "grand" and "grande";
This is further complicated when the noun following the adjective starts with a vowel sound:

| | English | French |
|---|---|---|
| Singular | a good Indian<br>/a gud indjan/ | un bon Indien<br>/œ̃ bɔ nɛ̃djɛ̃/ |
| | a good Indien /idem/ | une bonne Indienne<br>/yn bɔ nɛ̃ djɛn/ |

In English, a good Indian is a phrase that can apply to a man or a woman.

In French, distinguishing "un bon Indien" from "une bonne Indienne" is tricky as the liaison between "bon" and "Indien" denasalizes /ɔ̃/ so it sounds /ɔ/ as in "bonne". There remain two clues to knowing whether one is speaking of a man or a woman:

| Masculine | Feminine |
|---|---|
| un /œ̃/ | une /yn/ |
| Indien /ɛ̃ djɛ̃/ | Indienne /ɛ̃djɛn/ |

ADJECTIVES - Number:

In English no agreement in number either.

|  | Singular | Plural |
|---|---|---|
| English | The good Indian | The good Indians |
|  | A good Indian | Good Indians |
| French | Le bon Indien | Les bons Indiens |
|  | Un bon Indien | De bons Indiens |

In English, adjectives accompany nouns but there is no sounded or written mark of the plural, they are invariable. In French, they agree in number as they do in gender. If they are placed before a noun starting with a vowel sound one hears the mark of the plural through the liaison, otherwise NOT. When the article is "un" the plural is "des" BUT in front of a plural adjective which precedes the noun it becomes "de", so that in an example such as "de fameux peintres" pupils will have great difficulties associating "de" with a plural.

Examples: PRONOUNS - Gender

In English, as in French, subject pronouns have no gender except for the third person; in both languages there are "three genders" for the third person:

| English | French |
|---|---|
| he | il |
| she | elle |
| it | ce, c' |

The difficulty for students lies in hearing clearly the difference between: "il" and "elle" /il/ vs. /ɛl/

The difference in French lies in the vowel sound, whereas in English it lies in a consonantic difference.

Compare: "Who is it?" to "Qui est-ce?"
and "It is Paul." to "C'est Paul."

Compare: "He is Paul's friend." "C'est l'ami de Paul."

This difference if not well perceived when receiving messages is very difficult to acquire when producing them.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| REMEMBER: | "I speak to him." | "Je lui parle." |
| | "I speak to her." | "Je lui parle." |

If the context is not clear in French, then either of two forms must be used to clarify the feminine:

a) "C'est à elle que je parle."
b) "Je lui parle, à elle."

Obviously there are also differences in expressing number of pronouns in both languages.

VERBS - Endings:

Except for the third person singular of regular verbs, there is no specific ending to verbs in English. Students must be made aware of this basic difference.

| English | French |
|---|---|
| "I speak" /aj spijk/ | "Je parle" /ʒə parl/ |
| "We speak" /wij spijk/ | " ous parlons" /nu pa rlɔ̃/ |

In English, the pronoun is the only indication of the person doing the action; no wonder that our students forget the verb endings corresponding to subject pronouns. Furthermore the only aural difference is that of the third person singular which always ends with a sounded "s". In French this is NEVER the case: the only singular person taking a final, unsounded "s" is the second one. How can we blame students if we do not draw their attention to this matter through as many explanations and exercises as possible.

Examples:

| English | French |
|---|---|
| "he sings" | "Il chante" |
| /hij sɪŋz/ | /il ʃãt/ |
| "they sing" | "Ils chantent" |
| /ðej sɪŋ/ | /il ʃãt/ |

In French, the only way to distinguish the singular from the plural with verbs of the first conjugation is from the context. Most of the mistakes will then occur in the written form.

VERBS - Tenses:

Tenses are marked in different ways in both languages.

Compare:

Examples:

| English | French |
|---|---|
| "I sing" /aj sɪŋ/ | "Je chante" /ʒə ʃăt/ |
| "I'll sing" /ajl sɪŋ/ | "Je chanterai" /ʒə ʃătre/ |

In English an auxiliary is inserted before the part of the verb carrying the meaning (the radical); in French it is added to the radical "shall or will" in English, "r" plus the endings of the present of the verb "avoir" in French. Thus the English speaking student must listen for the sound indicating the future tense in a place other than it would appear in English.

### 4.2.1.4 Structural differences.

Having seen some of the difficulties that arise when listening to the elements of the sentence, we shall now endeavour to highlight the differences between English and French sentence structures.

Though English and French have many similar sentence formations, the variants within the groups cause many frustrations to our students.

Examples: NOUN GROUP - Place of adjectives:

| English | French |
|---|---|
| "The little dog" | "Le petit chien" |
| "The little brown dog" | "Le petit chien brun" |

Some adjectives go before the noun in French, as they do in English; others go after. Why? There is no helpful explanation; however, students could learn by heart that "autre, petit, grand, gros, gentil, mauvais, méchant" go before the noun as do ordinal adjectives such as "premier". But to "Last week" corresponds "La semaine dernière".

Examples: VERB GROUP - Negative form:

| English | French |
|---|---|
| "I look" | "Je regarde" |
| "I don't look" | "Je ne regarde pas" |
| "I am looking" | "Je regarde" |
| "I am not looking" | "Je ne regarde pas" |

To the two possibilities in English due to the progressive form which does not exist in French in a verbal form - need for "en train de" - there is only one in French, but the negative adverb is split into two parts "ne... pas" which often seems to be a double negation so that students skip one or the other part of it. Draw their attention to this in the oral presentation and production, and reinforce visually through diagrams, drawings or the printed word.

VERB GROUP - Interrogative form:

Observe that in the interrogative as in the negative form there are two ways of putting a question in both languages, yet they are different:

| English | French |
|---|---|
| "You look" | "Vous regardez" |
| "Do you look?" | "Regardez-vous?" |
| "You are looking" | "Vous regardez" |
| "Are you looking?" | "Regardez-vous?" |
| "Do you look?"<br>"Are you looking?" | ALSO "Est-ce que vous regardez?" |

So whether your students subconsciously or consciously use the English interrogative form they are in trouble because neither of the French forms corresponds to the English ones.

VERB GROUP - Place of pronouns:

The place of the pronouns whether they are direct or indirect objects is not the same in English and French whether it be a simple tense - present, imperfect or future - or a composed one - "passé composé, plus-que-parfait or futur antérieur".

Examples:

| English | French |
|---|---|
| "I see it" | "Je le/la vois" |
| "I see him" | "Je le vois" |
| "I see her" | "Je la vois" |

The pronoun object is AFTER THE VERB in English, BEFORE THE VERB in French; furthermore, "it" can be translated by "le" or "la" as the case may be.

| English | | French | |
|---|---|---|---|
| "I saw<br>"I have seen | it"<br>her"<br>him" | "Je l'ai | vu"<br>vue" |

consider the trifold problem here:

Place: a) In English, whether the tense is simple or compound the pronoun object goes AFTER, whereas

b) In French, the pronoun object goes

BEFORE { the simple tense
the AUXILIARY of the compound tense

One vs. Three

c) In English one uses "it, her, him", whereas

d) In French one uses "l'" for all genders, as "ai" starts by a vowel sound, thus eliminating any sign of the gender in the past tense.

BUT

Agreement

e) In French, the gender is hidden into the "l'" and depending on the context, "vu" takes the mark of the masculine "vu + O" or of the feminine "vu + E" because the direct object is placed before the verb conjugated with avoir.

ANOTHER way to present this to more scientific minds could be:

English: ONE place, no agreement:

$$\text{Subject} + \begin{matrix}\text{Verb}\\ \text{Aux.V.}\end{matrix} + \text{Pron. Obj.}$$

French: Place of Pr. Ob. changes + agreement

Subject + Pron.Obj. + Verb
Subject + Pron.Obj. + Aux.V. + Past Part + agreement

This construction is further complicated when the sentence is constructed in the negative form:

| English | French |
|---|---|
| "I do not see it" | "Je ne le vois pas" |
| "I did not see it" | "Je ne l'ai pas vu" |

English remains the same "it" and the other pronouns come after the verb. In French the pronoun object comes immediately after the first part of the negation.

When further comparing the Direct Object pronouns, in their audible and visible forms, to the Indirect Object pronouns in both languages, we see that in English, for the 3rd person singular "him, her" can have either function; whereas in French "him, her", it", when they are D.O. correspond to "le, la", and when they are I.O. they correspond to "lui".

Examples:

| English | French |
|---|---|
| "I see him" | "Je le vois" |
| "I see her" | "Je la vois" |
| "I speak to him" | "Je lui parle" |
| "I speak to her" | "Je lui parle" |

| | |
|---|---|
| HIM (D.O.) | LE |
| HER (D.O.) | LA |
| HIM (I.O.)<br>HER (I.O.) | LUI |

So, in French it appears that all of a sudden when pronouns are indirect objects, gender no longer has any importance.

When a Direct Object pronoun is used together with an Indirect Object pronoun students must pay special attention in listening to their succession so as to understand the message.

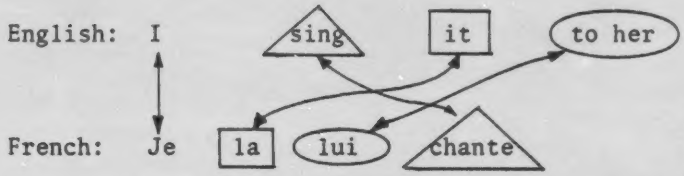
Examples:

| English | French |
|---|---|
| "I sing a song to my daughter" | "Je chante une chanson à ma fille" |
| "I sing it to her" | "Je la lui chante" |

| | |
|---|---|
| S.+ V. + D.O.+ to + I.O. | S.+ D.O.+ I.O.+ V. |

Some students might be helped by a diagram illustrating why they tend to be confused.

Example:



## Word linking. (les liaisons)

"There is a strong tendency in English to cut out words in a sentence, to delimit them, to individualize them: "an aim" does not sound the same as "a name". This is not the case in French, where the syllabic pattern of "open syllables" - syllables ending in a vowel sound - dominates even at the cost of words losing their identity in the course of the spoken chain of syllables. This makes French hard to understand, orally, but it is an essential part of French pronunciation in connected discourse, and it must be imitated.

Examples: "un nain gras" will sound as "un ingrat"
/œ̃ nɛ̃ gra/ /œ̃ nɛ̃ gra/

Linking occurs when words are closely related:

Examples: "Ils_habitent" "Les gens / habitent"
"Est-il ici" "Il est beau et/aimable"

There are four levels of "liaison" which depend on the style used by the speaker:

a) In familiar conversation, few liaisons are made.

b) In careful conversation, some more are made.

c) When lecturing, a majority of them are made.

d) When reading, they are all compulsory.

Examples:

a) "Des_hommes / illustres / ont / attendu."

b) "Des_hommes/illustres/ont_attendu."

c) "Des_hommes_illustres/ont_attendu."

d) "Des_hommes_illustres_ont_attendu"

The liaison takes place, most often, between a functional term and a lexical one:

Examples: "nous arrivons" "les amis" "deux élèves"
"en arrivant"

There is only one exception to this rule: the verb pronoun.
Examples: "est-il" "sont-ils" "entrent-ils" "allez-y"

There are more "liaisons" in the plural than in the singular.

Examples: "les soldats_espagnols" "un soldat/ espagnol"

The shorter the first word the more probability there is for a "liaison".

Examples: "Dans_un jour" vs. "Depuis / un jour."
"Très_utile" "Extrêmement / utile"

Only the obligatory "liaisons" can be made after nasal vowel sounds. They are to be made after "un, en, on, mon, ton, son, bien, rien" and the qualificative adjectives ending with a nasal vowel.

Examples: "Un bon_élève", "un ancien_ami"

The only consonants that entail "liaison" are: "s,z,x,t,d,n,r, p,g,"

Examples: "l'heureux_homme" "trop_aimable" "prends_un dé"

Some of the consonant sounds change slightly in this process.

Obligatory "liaisons" are:

a determiner + noun
a personal pronoun + verb
verb + pronoun

Invariable monosyllabics (en_une, très_utile)
Fixed forms (comment_allez-vous? les_Etats-Unis, accent_aigu, tout_à coup, de temps_en temps)

Facultative "liaisons" are:

a plural noun with a following adjective,
a plural noun and the verb following it,
a verb followed by another one,
invariable polysyllabics.

Examples: "des soldats_anglais, ses plans_ont réussi"
"je vais_essayer, vous êtes_invités, j'avais_entendu"
"pendant_un jour, toujours_utile"

Forbidden "liaisons" are:

a singular noun followed by an adjective,
a singular noun followed by a verb,
after "et"
No "liaison" between a word before "h" when aspirated.
No "liaison between any word followed by un, huit, onze et dérivés.

Examples:

"un soldat / anglais"
"son plan / a réussi"
"...et / on l'a fait"
"des / héros"
"en / haut"
"le cent / un, la cent / unième"
"la cent / huitième"
"en / onze jours, dans / huit jours"

### 4.2.1.5. SPECIAL HINTS - ATTENTION!

Special attention is drawn to the following difficulties which generally stem from the fact that one hears what one thinks one knows - what one thinks one recognizes - based on previously acquired knowledge, and consequently makes wrong inferences. Many of the following are familiar to teachers:

| Known English | NEW French |
|---|---|
| "we" | "oui" (sounds like "we" not like "yes") |
| "say" | "c'est"(to: "c'est le chapeau" pupils react as if we were asking them to "say" "le chapeau" and repeat only: "le chapeau") |
| "who?" | "où" (mistaken for "who" yields answers such as: "C'est Guy" rather than: "à l'école") |
| "bonny day!" | "bonne idée!" (see page 113) |

| Known French | NEW French |
|---|---|
| "Comment vas-tu" | "Quel âge as-tu"<br>(The beginning of the sentence is not heard; the same ending leads to confusion (?) ) |
| "Comment allez-vous?" | "Comment vous appelez-vous"<br>("allez" and "appelez" are heard as being the same; both questions end with "lez-vous" and start with "comment".) |
| "Il va aller" | "Il veut aller" or vice versa depending on which one was acquired first.<br>(Due to the difficulty in perceiving the /ø/ "eu" sound as opposed to the "a" sound.) |
| "doigt" | "droit" heard as "doigt" or vice versa depending on which one was acquired first. (Great difficulty is experienced by anglophones in hearing the "r" sound after "t" as in "très" heard as "tes".) |
| "vous montez" | "vous montrez" or vice versa (this is further complicated when introducing "montrerez"). |
| "vous montrerez" | "vous montrerez" (confused for the reason stated above). |

### 4.2.2. The written language

The written form expresses in one manner or another the sound system used to communicate messages. Obviously, since the English and French alphabets have only 26 letters some of these must be combined to form the equivalents of the sounds in English and the 36 to 37 sounds of French.

Contrary to other Romance Languages, French is not a highly phonetic language; that is to say that there are many ways of spelling certain sounds such as /o/: "o, au, eau, os, aux, eaux, ô". This partial correspondence between the heard sounds and their written transcription necessitates careful presentation and thorough assimilation. The transcription often depends on the meaning derived from the context.

Examples: "C'est un saint"
"C'est un seing." heard as /sɛ tœ̃ sɛ̃/
"C'est un sein."

One of the best ways to introduce the French correspondence between sounds and letters of the written alphabet is to begin early, from day one, playing a game with the vowel sounds expressed by one vowel letter. The teacher pronounces them and after discrimination exercises (oral) writes one down: "i"; then goes on to "a" and "u". Experiment with these three vowels for a few periods adding consonant sounds.

Example: "a" /a/ dans "table, ma, ta, sa, la"
"i" /i/ dans "mi, si, ni, fi,"
"u" /y/ dans "du, lu, nu, pu, su, tu, vu."

The same thing should be done with the other vowels, then with the groups such as: "eau, au, ..."; after this, introduce the written representation of aural nasal sounds "on, an, en, un". Often the written symbols are not heard, as in the case of certain verb endings.

Example: "il chante", "ils chantent" are heard as /il ʃɑ̃t/·

On the other hand, liaisons which are heard are not visible.

Examples: "les enfants" /le zɑ̃ fɑ̃/; "un enfant" /œ̃ nɑ̃ fɑ̃/.

Furthermore, apart from these simple matters of sound/symbol correspondences French is loaded with intricacies due to the diverse systems of agreements: verbs with their subjects, adjectives with the nouns they modify, past participles conjugated with "être" or with "avoir". Agreements can be mastered provided students are taught to "reason out" why certain elements of the sentence have to agree with others. They have to learn to put the questions in such a manner that they will produce the correct spelling.

Examples: "ils étaient grands"

> "C'est la troisième personne du masculin pluriel, on entend la liaison entre "ils" et "étaient", donc, "ent" s'ajoute à la partie du verbe que l'on entend, "grands" s'accorde en genre et en nombre avec le sujet de "étaient" donc on ajoute "s" à "grand" adjectif masculin.

Students having acquired reading and writing habits in English will have difficulties with the different associations of letters to the sounds they represent. When seeing the letter "a" they will automatically pronounce it as in English, and "an"/a/ will be pronounced as in "and" not as in "angoisse".

It would thus seem that in order for students to really benefit from the support of the written language they should first be initiated and often reminded that though the letters in both languages are the same, they do not share the same pronunciation. This might be one way to avoid some frequent misspellings due to using the English alphabet to spell French words.

Example: "il" spelled in French: /i/ corresponds to "il"
spelled in English: /ij/ corresponds to "el" or "eel".

One cannot emphasize enough the importance of a cautious introduction to writing so as to instil in the students a new way of looking at letters and the sounds to which they correspond.

### 4.2.2.2. Spelling

A page written in French seems to be full of accents and peculiar addenda with which students are unfamiliar. They should immediately be told that accents, "cédille" and the like, are very important in French as they represent either different sounds or different functions of words which otherwise would be identical.

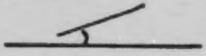
Examples: "Où est Paul?" vs. "Paul ou Pierre?"

Details on spelling are given in the following pages.

Amongst the accents representing differences in pronunciation are the following:

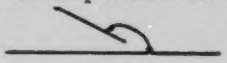
é as in "écouté" found in "il a écouté"

This "accent aigu" corresponds to a closed /e/ pronounced with a semi-closed mouth and is represented by an accent which corresponds to an acute (aigu) angle.



è as in "lève" found in "il lève"

This "accent grave" corresponds to an open /ɛ/ pronounced with an open mouth and is represented by an accent which corresponds to a wide angle.



Students can be led to discriminate between these two sounds and to show they are discriminating them well by writing down the accent which corresponds to the sound they hear.

ê as in "forêt" is used on all vowels but mainly on "e". It often replaces an "s", still present in English but which has disappeared in French:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| "Château" | corresponds to | "castle" |
| "forêt" | " " | "forest" |
| "île" | " " | "isle" |
| "hôpital" | " " | "hospital" |

The "accent grave" and the "accent circonflexe", apart from being used to indicate different sound variations, are also used to distinguish words according to their function. The "accent grave" (`) will be placed on "a" to distinguish this one-letter word according to its function:

"il a" where "a" is the verb form,
"il va à l'école" where "à" is a preposition.

It can also be placed on the "u" of "ou" which means "either" to change meaning and function: "où" then means "where" in the affirmative or the interrogative forms:

"J'irai à Paris ou à Londres, je ne sais pas encore."

"Je ne sais pas où il est."
"Où vas-tu?"

The "accent grave" is also used on "la" to distinguish the feminine article and the direct pronoun object from the adverb "là" meaning "there".

La plus belle femme du monde est là, la voilà!
(art.) (adv.) (pronoun)

^ The "accent circonflexe" is used to differentiate the determiner "du" from the past participle of "devoir" in the masculine singular.

J'ai acheté du sucre hier. Il aurait dû le savoir.

It is also used to distinguish between "le mur" (the wall) and "mûr" (ripe) and "la mûre" (blackberry).

ç The "cédille" is placed only under "c" when it precedes "a,o,u" so that it may be sounded like "s".

"J'aime mieux ça."
"Il sait sa leçon."
"J'ai bien reçu votre lettre."

Students might be shown that the "cédille", looking like a little pig tail, makes the "c" look like an "s" which is the sound it represents.

Apostrophes are not unique to French but students may not always realize what they stand for in English; furthermore they generally put them down in a very casual way, which is unacceptable to French spelling, students should be taught what the apostrophe stands for in English and then shown when it is used in French.

It replaces one letter in: It's fun.
It replaces two letters in: I'll sing tomorrow.
It replaces one letter in: I don't know.
It replaces nothing in: I drive my father's car to school.
or in: The students' decision was approved.
but indicates the possessive case.

In French the apostrophe always represents the suppression of a letter, generally of "e"

"C'est le mien." for "Ce est le mien." seen in "Ce sont les miens."

"Je l'ai vu." for "le" as can be seen in: "Je les ai vus."
"Je l'ai vue." for "la" as can be seen in :"Je les ai vues."
"Qu'il vienne! for "que" as can be seen in :"Que vous veniez!"

Other difficulties in spelling may arise from certain orthographic idiosyncrasies pertianing to each language such as double consonants in one language and not in the other:

| | |
|---|---|
| an address | une adresse |
| a committee | un comité |

At other times certain groups of letters are never to be found in French yet are quite frequent in English such is the case for "ght". This English combination causes difficulties when learning to spell "doigt". In this particular case the difficulty may be overcome by spelling the word out loud with all the class, inviting them to raise one finger each time they pronounce a letter. End the exercise by showing that there are five fingers and five letters and no more.

### 4.2.2.3. Agreements

The numerous types of agreements which have to be remembered when writing in French further complicate the learning to write correct French. It is even more difficult as most of these agreements are inexistent in English; consequently from the start, and even when doing oral work, one should insist on agreement between the noun and the article, the noun and the adjective for gender and number, of the noun and the verb for number with simple tenses, and for gender and number with compound ones. To touch on a few points here are some examples:

a) agreement of determiners, nouns and adjectives: number and gender.

| | |
|---|---|
| le petit garçon | les petits garçons |
| la petite fille | les petites filles |
| les oranges mûres | les citrons mûrs |

In English, students are accustomed to placing an "s" only at the end of the noun.

b) agreement of verbs with their subject, nouns and pronouns.

| | |
|---|---|
| Pierre parle. | Pierre et Jean parlent. |
| Il parle. | Ils parlent. |

(Contrast the spelling of the third person singular, in English ending with "s", and that of French.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Tu parles beaucoup. | Vous parlez beaucoup. |

(Contrast the "s" used for the second person singular in French to the English usage: The "s" is in the third person singular in the mother tongue. What a source of confusion!)

c) agreement of past participles for verbs conjugated with "être".

Generally they agree in gender and number with the subject unless they are followed by a direct object.
Elle est descendue tôt ce matin.
Elle s'est lavée. (Elle a lavé qui? Elle, remplacé par "s'" placé avant le verbe)

Attention: Elle s'est lavé les mains avant de manger.
direct object
(Elle a lavé quoi? ses mains, placé après le verbe)

d) agreement of past participles for verbs conjugated with "avoir".

The past participle agrees in gender and number with the object placed before it.

J'avais achet*é* ces belles robes. Je *les* avais achet*ées* pour toi.
La pièce *que* tu as vu*e* m'a beaucoup plu.

### 4.2.2.4. The conjugation system

Experience has shown that the verb is the cause of most of the mistakes made by students whether in school or university. There is but one way to overcome this constant ill: verb forms must be memorized systematically, which entails a great deal of in-class checking and drill. There is also a need to help students develop a system for learning conjugations as without verbs there is no possible communication since their endings transmit the message indicating the time of action: Am I speaking of the present, the past or the future; of the world of reality or of the "may be", "might be" world expressed by the conditionnal or the subjunctive moods, as the case may be?

In English, as in French, the most frequently used verbs are the most irregular ones.

Examples: "I have, I had" and "j'ai, j'ai eu"

In view of the difficulties encountered in mastering verbs we suggest that *from the very first day* each verb form be committed to memory, orally and in the written form - the latter at home.

As soon as the program, or the teacher, introduces a new tense students should realize that they too have a variety of tenses with which to express actions relating to time. This awareness should be reached NOT BY TRANSLATION but by contrasting in French the present and the "passé composé" or the present and the future. Encourage students, with verbs different from those that are to be used in French, to find out in how many ways they can express the past or the future in their mother tongue. Then go to French. This differs from translation in that it requires that students be conscious of what they say naturally in their mother tongue.

In French, contrast the way in which different tenses are built: start with the radical, then show the endings corresponding to each person, or the modifications necessitated within the verb for the conditional or the future - remember the latter may be difficult as it is in sharp contrast with the use of semi-auxiliaries in English, before the verb, not within.

Simple rules are often sufficient.

Example: Never end the 3rd person singular with an "s".

At times, diagrams following a chart may help.

Example:

| English | | | French | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Radical | Ending | | Radical | Ending |
| you | sing | 0 | tu | chante | S |
| | | | tu | fini | S |
| | | | tu | prend | S |

| | |
|---|---|
| YOU + RADICAL + 0 | TU + RADICAL + S |

BUT

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| he + sing + | S | il chant | + | E |
| | | il fin | + | IT |
| | | il prend | + | 0 |
| | | il met | + | 0 |

| | |
|---|---|
| HE + RADICAL + S | IL + RADICAL + E<br>IT<br>0 |

IN FRENCH

tu + radical + S

il + radical + E
IT
0

## Moods and tenses:

Too often moods and tenses are confused, which creates complications. It might be a good idea to give students in their third or fourth year of French an idea of the complexity of the conjugational system so that they would know what they have already mastered and what remains to be learned.

The Indicative mood - expressing reality

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Présent | Passé composé | Passé sur-composé |
| Futur | Futur antérieur | |
| Imparfait | Plus-que-parfait | |
| Passé simple | Passé antérieur | |

The Conditional mood - expressing the possible, not the "real"

| | |
|---|---|
| Présent | Passé première forme |
| | Passé deuxième forme |

The Subjunctive mood - expressing the subjective, not the "real"

| | |
|---|---|
| Présent | Passé composé |
| Imparfait | Plus-que-parfait |

The Imperative mood - expressing commands

| | |
|---|---|
| Présent | Passé (Ayez appris vos leçons pour lundi!) |

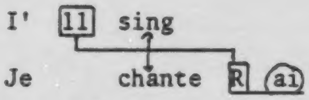
| The Participal Mood | | The Infinitive Mood | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Présent | Passé | Présent | Passé |

SUMMARY
6 moods
10 simple tenses  12 compound tenses

Each compound tense indicates an action which took place BEFORE the one indicated by the corresponding simple tense.

After you have used all the usual techniques to introduce the future tense you could contrast the compositions of this tense in English and French:

| | Present | Future |
|---|---|---|
| English | I sing | I' ll sing |
| French | Je chante | Je chante R ai |



The diagram can be done with the other persons and then with verbs pertaining to another conjugation so that the formation of the tense becomes automatic.

Some students may come up with their own rules and should be encouraged to do so, as long as their results are consistently correct.

### 4.2.2.5. Syntactical constructions

As was mentioned earlier, there are parallel constructions between English and French but the differences often cause difficulties to our students. Complex sentences should be studied so that logical ties can be recognized so that students can benefit from more interesting reading material without fumbling over structures which they have not met.

Inverted interrogation.

This interrogative construction exists in both languages:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| You | see | the | book. | becomes | Do | you | see | the book? |
| S | V | | | | V | S | V | |
| Tu | vois | le | livre | " | Vois- | tu | le livre? | |
| S | V | | | | V | S | | |

The concept of "inverted Subject Verb" is a known concept, or at least may be brought to conscious awareness.

Many students when asked to use this form in French are tempted to say and write: "Est-il étudie?". When the teacher spots this mistake it is important to make the students immediately aware that they are unwittingly using the English model to put inverted question in French. Once the verb elicited in the first example, "vois", and the subject, "tu", is found, the inversion becomes a simple thing. A series of examples should be completed in French until the pattern is established.

Then it is useful to get the students to find out why they wrote: "es-tu vois?" Sometimes they will simply answer that they are just "stupid". When shown that they insert "es" because they insert a verbal form in English they are readier to overcome this type of negative transfer.

Actually, in this case the point can be made without translating or using grammatical terminology, which represents just another language hurdle, by using the students' own ability to analyze his mother tongue, to become conscious of what he does when he wants to express his thoughts to others.

## Time sequence and concordance of tenses

Students should be made aware of the fact that native speakers of French perceive the message they hear or read in relation to the function of the tenses used; therefore the tenses are very important and their use is closely related to meaning. Some useful rules which could be suggested to them are:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1) is the action taking place now? | - present |
| 2) did it take place? | - past* |
| 3) is it going to take place? | - future |

If the action is in the past there are many possibilities:

2.1.*"J'étais à la fenêtre, je le regardais passer."
This usage of the Indicative Imperfect is transcribing a "present in the past"; it is "setting the frame", the "mood". (If I don't get out of this tense there will be no action, no story.)

2.2. "J'étais à la fenêtre, je l'ai vu passer..."
The "present in the past" is interrupted at the precise time: "the moment I saw him" so the "passé composé" is used to indicate this precise action at a precise time.

2.3 "Je suis à la maison, je vais sortir et j'achèterai à manger."

When I am going to go out is not defined, nor is the time of my purchasing, but both actions will take place later than "now".

To summarize, compare:

| Before | Now | Later | |
|---|---|---|---|
| "j'ai mangé" | "je mange" | "je vais manger" | "je mangerai" |
| /____________/ | ____________/ | ________________/ | ______________/ |

with:

"je mangeais"
/____________/

Direct vs. Indirect speech:

Now: "Tu es bête." vs. "Il dit que je suis bête."

Before: "Tu es bête" vs. "Il a dit que j'étais bête."

("tu es toujours bête." precise time vs. present in the past

"étais" is the frame to which one refers, a state of being which exists in the present and in the past.

## 4.2.2.6. Lexical terms

Having shared a lengthy common history, it is not surprising that English and French should share many lexical similarities.

Unfortunately the most frequently used words in both languages are the ones which have evolved in diverse directions thus acquiring different meanings. They are often called "faux-amis".

Examples: "to assist" means "to help" whereas
"assister" means to attend

There are about 590 of these words, most of which are used often although not with equal frequency.

BUT it should be remembered that there are about 11,000 words which, with only one difference in spelling, share at least one meaning in both languages. Amongst these cognates many belong to the thought-provoking vocabulary. Obviously then, the larger one's English vocabulary, the easier it will be to develop comprehension when hearing and especially reading French. There is no need to teach cognates as such; rather, it would be highly useful to show students the regularities which would increase their "passive" vocabulary - words which they recognize and understand - almost without effort; for information and pleasure they could then read texts at their level of intellectual development. Encouraging students to use their passive vocabulary would render it "active" and help them to express their thoughts.

Examples: "restaurant", "garage", "table", pronounced differently in English and in French, but spelled in the same way, are easy to recognize when reading but more difficult to pick out when listening.

"liberty" and "liberté" have only one spelling difference which can be easily spotted in a written text.

By teaching these similarities, students could be led to read texts which really interest them rather than rewrites of dialogues on which they have worked to the point of boredom.

### 4.2.2.7. Reading

It is a great asset in the initial stage of learning to teach students to read jointly with the introduction of written symbols corresponding to perceived sounds. This practice should be used regularly in Junior and Senior High as it helps to fix the new patterns of French.

The reading skills that have been developed in English should be exploited. Also, as French is a syllabic language and the letter/sound correspondence is different between the two languages it may help poor readers in English to find out more about the value of the correspondence between the spoken and the written language. It is also recommended that in the initial stages students be encouraged to practice reading out loud so as to develop the ability to deliver an oral message correctly, enunciating as close as possible to native French speech.

Suggestions: If the text is a short paragraph, or dialogue, have students listen to it, following on the overhead projector - line by line - or in their books. Stop after every breath group, or as close as possible to seven syllables, and lead them to discover what they have heard.

Example: a) a vowel sound which differs in English and French,

b) two letters pronounced as one,

c) letters not sounded (verb endings, plurals)

d) "liaisons" heard

Text for reading: "De plus, l'Alberta dispos~~e~~ d'immens~~es~~ cham~~ps~~ de sabl~~e~~ bitumineu~~x~~ riches en pétrol~~e~~. Les estimation~~s~~ concernan~~t~~ ces réserv~~es~~ exploitabl~~es~~ vari~~ent~~ fortement et se situ~~ent~~ entre 82 milliar~~ds~~ de baril~~s~~." (Le mois 1978/10 Société de Banque Suisse, Bâle, Suisse)

Ask the listeners/readers to underline the words they recognize: "dispose, immenses, bitumineux, riches, pétrole, estimations, concernant, réserves exploitables, varient, situent, baril". They will discover that out of 15 lexical terms they know 12, which should be highly encouraging and will facilitate understanding as well as increasing the possessed passive vocabulary. The exercise of finding similarities should then be followed by attempting to discover differences, and trying to infer the meaning, of the context from previously acquired knowledge. It is highly desirable to involve students in a search for meaning, each student participating according to individual learning and inferring styles. All students will share their findings. Encourage students to pick out the verbs, the subject, the relationships between the parts of the sentence.

Start by reading factual materials, which are easier than descriptions or short stories, or even amusing paragraphs. Reading is the best way to expose students frequently to correct structures. Home assignments should also consist of reading. By getting students to analyze, paraphrase and summarize their readings you help them to become aware of how French is "put together".

### 4.2.3. Translation

There is a place for some translation when giving direct equivalence of nouns, but most of the time, during the early stages translating is dangerous.

Example: "seulement" difficult to explain; is "only" in "Elle a seulement un frère." -- BUT in "Je viendrais volontiers, seulement je suis occupée." "seulement" means "but, however."

Remember, translation may be a necessary ill to gain time in the classroom but students should be well aware that there is no one to one correspondence between English and French, as has been shown throughout this section.

## 5. CONCLUSION

People often ask what type of French is being taught in the schools of Alberta. The answer is that we teach "standard" French, the language spoken by all educated people who use French, around the world, to communicate amongst themselves at the highest level of thought as well as in daily life. The French spoken in Paris is NOT the best model, just as the English spoken in London is not the best English.

It should be noted that the French spoken by the majority of French-speaking Canadian politicians, lawyers, judges, doctors, corresponds to the standard language and is the one used by educated people everywhere.

Another question which often comes up deals with what students will be able to do with the language we are teaching them. Remember that for a beginning student, the easiest French to understand is the one spoken by the teacher. The student has grown accustomed to the way his/her teacher speaks, to the tone of voice, facial expressions and gestures, as well as to the style of questioning, and the restricted vocabulary learned. The student will therefore have to adapt to other speakers when he/she leaves the classroom and encounters real life situations. Often students will have learned to frame questions but will fail to understand the answers given to them; this is a result of the restricted exposure to vocabulary and syntax which limits their ability to receive new messages.

It is also quite possible for a more advanced student, and even for a teacher, not to understand what native French speaking people are saying. They talk faster - do not stop between breath groups - enunciate poorly, and slur their words.

Example: "où est-ce que vous allez?" becomes /wɛ skvuzale/ instead of
/ u ɛs kə vu za le/

At the more advanced levels of French learning, students should be introduced to a variety of intonation and pronunciation patterns. It seems that to all practical purposes it is more convenient to teach standard French, which is closest to written French, than to start with the phonological and structural variants which pertain to one dialect or another. A teacher who speaks fluent and correct French will, of course, have his/her own variant of speech which is already an introduction to varieties of speech, especially if audio tapes are being used in the classroom as models or as supplementary auditory materials.

Furthermore, it is important to encourage students to become tolerant of accents other than their own, whether in their mother tongue or in the second language learned. There should be no feeling of superiority or inferiority between one regional accent or another, the main aim being to acquire an accent as close to native as possible, so as to be understood by a speaker of French wherever he/she may be. Each learner of a second language should be encouraged to overcome his nervousness and not be afraid to speak because of a feeling of inadequacy. Only constant practice in speaking the second language will make it one's own.

To summarize: the best way to achieve efficiency in the acquisition of the second language is to help students to become aware of what they are doing; to guide them in developing their mental ability to analyze, to compare and use analogies; to encourage and even to force them into doing some work on their own so that concepts presented, explained and practised in class are mastered, i.e. internalized to the point where they can be used with a certain degree of automation.

It should be remembered that grammar and rules can be used either as descriptions of what is observed or as prescriptive norms dealing with what can or cannot be done. However one looks at them, grammar rules are ONLY TOOLS to be used to help retention, they are of no use in or by themselves, and knowing them by heart does not lead to transfer to new situations. Students should be taught to understand what they are doing rather than to memorize rules.

It might be hypothesized that acquiring the ability to analyze and master some of the automatic responses in a second language will facilitate the acquisition of a third one.

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# THE FRENCH LANGUAGE
# AS SPOKEN IN CANADA

Dr. Roger Motut

*Advice to teachers*

Because we live in Canada where roughly one third of Canadians are of French origin and use French daily, a few hours spent on a close examination of the differences between Standard French and the various forms of French heard in Canada may well prove to be a very rewarding experience for those students who are interested in learning the language.

Teachers in the classroom are oftentimes faced by students who are French-speaking but who use a form of spoken French learned at home that is quite different from Academic French. The teacher should avoid passing judgment on the student's language, but rather, use the opportunity to explain to the student how his language differs from the accepted norms of spoken and written French. These norms are not regional in nature, but rather national and international. Students should be made to understand that in order to communicate orally or by the written word beyond their linguistic community, it is necessary for them to learn a standard academic French which involves rules of pronunciation, intonation, and syntax which may or may not correspond to their own form of French.

Language is also the vehicle of a culture. Much of the culture of French Canada is to be found in a rich literature written in standard French. Poets, novelists, journalists, radio and television use this language every day. It is therefore essential to know the language well.

The learning of academic French does not mean, however that within a family group or the context of their community, students may not continue to use a local form of dialect if this local dialect binds them closer to the group. There are many examples of this duality in many areas of the world. In England, in France, in Germany, in Spain, in Italy, people may use a local dialect, but these same people also speak and write a standard language acceptable to the wider community. In a sense, many of these people are bilingual.

Schools cannot teach the dialect forms of language. They can, and should make students aware of the differences. Teachers and students alike may find it a rewarding experience to spend a few hours analyzing the complexity of spoken languages. Words, like people, have a history. A study of this history may add a new dimension to language teaching.

## *History*

The first colonists who came to Canada from Europe were men and women who came mostly from Northern and Western France. They settled in Acadia and along the shores of the Saint Lawrence... in what is now the Maritimes and Quebec. These persons spoke the dialects of their native provinces in France and were, for the most part, uneducated. Those who were educated spoke a language that had not yet been unified in France. The spoken language brought to this country had its roots deep in the Middle Ages. It was more rich in vocabulary and expressions than French today because the language came from a very creative source: that of the people. A quick reading of Rabelais's works will convince the reader of the richness of the language spoken at the time.

The language brought to Canada can be traced to a period in history when linguistic barriers did not exist between France and England. After the Norman conquest and for a long time, French was the language of the court and the kings of England and of their relatives across the Channel. Many of the Old French words that passed into English as we know it today, were brought to Canada. These words, kept in English and long-since forgotten in France. Some were kept alive in New France. Ex: mouver: to move. In those days, in France and England, "voyager" was known as "traveler"; "bruit" was known as "noise"; "meurtre" was "murder", "ancêtre" was "ancessors", and "maison was "mansion"... etc.[1] England kept these words. They were abandoned in France.

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[1] Barbeau, Victor. *Le français du Canada.* Québec: Garneau, 1970, p. 15.

In Canada, such words as "arier" or "arrière", "assayer" for "essayer", "damage" for "domage", "dessur" for "dessus", "dret" for "droit", "fret" for "froid" are still alive and used by French Canadians. These words are not badly pronounced, as some may think, but are genuine French words brought directly from the Middle Ages and kept alive on this side of the Ocean. These words have retained their original pronunciation.

With the arrival of more colonists from various parts of France, the dialects spoken by these people mixed gradually to form a common language long before such a unifying movement began in France. Educated Frenchmen, members of the Clergy, administrators, army officers had a daily contact with the people in Canada and their language did have an influence on the quality of French spoken. Schools for both girls and boys were founded and many of the children of the first colonists received a very good education for the time. Visitors to Canada were surprised at the quality of French spoken by the early settlers.

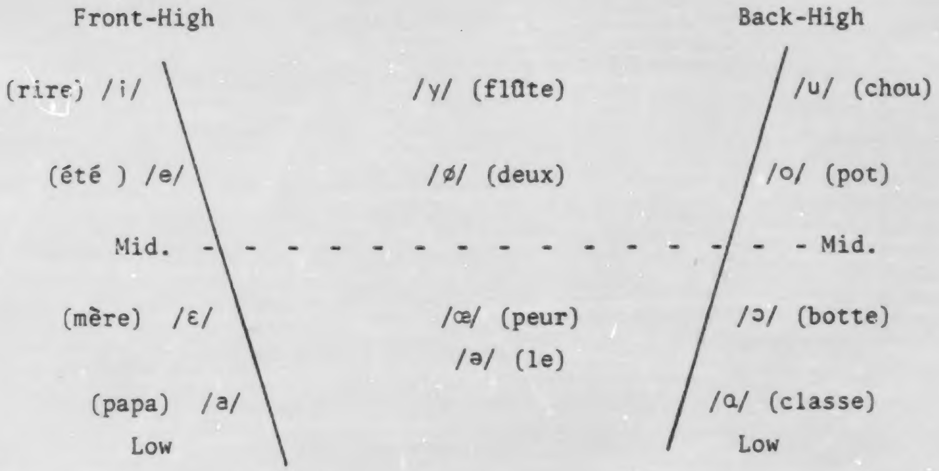
After the fall of Quebec, many of the educated classes returned to France. The new administrators, the army of occupation, the new businessmen were English and had to deal with the population through translators who were not always experts at their new profession. This resulted in many English words slipping into the language of the inhabitants. This situation lasted for a very long time as French Canadians were cut off from France. Schools were slowly being reorganized and there were few teachers to train others. Texts in newspapers were usually poor translations of an English text. All these influences created a type of French influenced by English in vocabulary, sentence structure and even pronunciation. Some of these influences have persisted to this day in the spoken language; ex: Qu'est-ce que tu cherches pour? (What are you looking for?)

Because the pronunciation of a language is due to the basic sound elements (phonemes) used in the spoken language, a close look at the vowel and consonant systems of standard French as compared to Canadian French might help understand the speech habits of some speakers.

## *The phonemes of Standard French*

In Standard French there are, according to most linguists, 16 sounds known as vowel sounds. These are classified according to their place and mode of articulation in the mouth, as front and back vowels, high and low, open or closed, rounded or unrounded, nasals or non-nasals.

The following vowel triangle will help exemplify the above statement.


Front-High
Back-High
(rire) /i/
/y/ (flûte)
/u/ (chou)
(été ) /e/
/ø/ (deux)
/o/ (pot)
Mid.
Mid.
(mère) /ε/
/œ/ (peur)
/ɔ/ (botte)
/ə/ (le)
(papa) /a/
/ɑ/ (classe)
Low
Low

There are four nasal sounds: /ε̃/ as in (fin)
/ɑ̃/ as in (dans)
/ɔ̃/ as in (bon)
/œ̃/ as in (brun)

While most French Canadians retain the vowel sound system of Standard French, they have introduced or kept elements in the course of three centuries that are foreign to Frenchmen. These shifts in the spoken language of French Canadians may best be understood by means of the following vowel chart which attempts to give variants, as found in Canada.

| *Phoneme* | *Symbol* | *Example* | *Pronunciation* | *Canadian French* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /i/ | i | midi | /midi/ | /midi/ or /midzi<br>or /mɪdzi/ |
|  | î | île | /il/ | /il/ or /ɪl/ |
|  | y | style | /stil/ | /stil/ or /stɪl/ |

Generally in Canada the high front unrounded /i/ sound of Standard French is less closed and is close in pronunciation to the English /ɪ/ as in the word sit.

|  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /e/ | e | essence | /esɑ̃s/ | /esɑ̃s/ or /ɛsɑ̃s/ |
|  | é | bébé | /bebe/ | /bebe/ or /bəbe/ |
|  | er | parler | /peʀle/ | /paʀle/ or /parle/ |
|  |  |  |  | /r/ is used here to indicate a roll |
|  |  |  |  | /r/ in contrast to the uvular /ʀ/ |
|  | ez | avez | /ave/ | /ave/ |
|  | ai | j'allai | /ʒale/ | /ʒale/ or /hale/ |
|  | ei | neiger | /neʒe/ | /neʒe/ or /nɛze/ |
|  |  |  |  | or /nɛ$^{I}$ʒe/ |

Note. Usually when the sound /e/ is in final position, it is colsed. It may vary from open to diphthong in mid or closed position as /ɛ/ or /ɛ$^{I}$/.

|  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /ɛ/ | e | dette | /dɛt/ | /dɛt/ |
|  | è | lève | /lɛv/ | /lɛv/ |
|  | ê | fête | /fɛt/ | /fɛt/ or /fɛ$^{I}$t/ |
|  |  |  |  | or /fa$^{I}$t/ |
|  | ë | Noël | /nɔɛl/ | /nɔɛl/ or /noɛl/ or<br>/nowɛl/ or /nwɛl/ |
|  | ei | beige | /bɛʒ/ | /bɛʒ/ or /beʒ/ or |
|  |  |  |  | /bɛ$^{I}$ʒ/ or /be$^{I}$ʒ/ |

| *Phoneme* | *Symbol* | *Example* | *Pronunciation* | *Canadian French* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /ɛ/ | ai | aide | /ɛd/ | /ɛd/ or /ed/ or /ɛ$^{I}$d/ or /e$^{I}$d/ |
|  | aî | maître | /mɛtʀ/ | /mɛtʀ/ or /mɛ$^{I}$t/ or /mɛ$^{I}$tr/ or /me$^{I}$t/ |

Note that there is a strong tendency to diphthongize the /ɛ/ to /ɛ$^{I}$/. This also happens when the open /ɛ/ is replaced by the closed /e/ vowel sound. In some cases open /e/ may be replaced by /a$^{I}$/ in which case /fɛ$^{I}$t/ would become /fa$^{I}$t/.

|  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /a/ | a | parle | /paʀl/ | /paʀl/ or /parl/ or /pal/ |
|  | à | à | /a/ | /a/ or /ɔ/ |
|  | e | femme | /fam/ | /fam/ |
|  | oi | toi | /twa/ | /twa/ or /twe/ |
|  | oy | voyons | /vwajɔ̃/ | /vwajɔ̃/ or /wɛjɔ̃/ |
|  | oe | moelle | /mwal/ | /mwal/ or /mwɛl/ |

Note: In the word poêle /pwal/ the /a/ sound would become /e$^{I}$/ to give /pwɛ$^{I}$l/ whereas in the word poil, the vowel would sound as an /ɛ/ to give /pwɛl/.

The /ʀ/ sound before the /l/ is some times dropped. "Ne me parle pas" may be heard in dialect form as /pal mwe pɔ/.

|  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /ɑ/ | a | âme | /ɑm/ | /ɑm/ or /ɑ$^{u}$m/ |
|  | a | classe | /klɑs/ | /klɑs/ or /klɑ$^{u}$s/ |
|  | oi | bois (wood) | /bwɑ/ | /bwɑ/ or /bwɔ/ |
|  |  | boire (drink) | /bwaʀ/ | /bwɛr/ or /bwɛ$^{I}$r/ or /bwer/ or /bwe$^{I}$r/ or /bwɑr/ |

Note: Only the /ɑ/ sound is diphthongized. The final /ɑ/ may sometimes be pronounced as an /ɔ/.

| *Phoneme* | *Symbol* | *Example* | *Pronunciation* | *Canadian French* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /ɔ/ | o | motte | /mɔt/ | /mɔt/ |
| | au | Paul | /pɔl/ | /pɔl/ |
| | ô | hôpital | /ɔpital/ | /ɔpital/ |
| | eau | château | /ʃɑto/ | /ʒɑto/ or /ʃɔto/ |

Note: In words such as poteau, coteau, etc., the first /ɔ/ sound may be closed by anticipation of the /o/ sound that follows to give /poto/, /koto/ etc.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /u/ | ou | bout | /bu/ | /bu/ or /bʊt/ |
| | oû | coûte | /kut/ | /kut/ or /kʊt/ |

Note: In Canadian French the /u/ sound is not as closed as the French /u/. It sounds more like the /ʊ/ of 'foot'. The final /t/ is oftentimes sounded. /tu/ becomes /tʊt/ etc.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /y/ | u | sur | /syr/ | /syr/ or /sy/ |
| | û | flûte | /flyt/ | /flyt/ or /flʏt/ |
| | eu | eu | /y/ | /y/ |

Note: The final /ʀ/ of 'sur' is sometimes dropped as are other final consonant clusters. 'Sur la table' may be pronounced /sy a tab/. The final /b/ is barely perceptible.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /ø/ | eu | deux | /dø/ | /dø/ |
| | oeu | oeufs (pl) | /ø/ | /ø/ |
| /œ/ | eu | peur | /pœʀ/ | /pœʀ/ or /pøʀ/<br>or /pœ$^{ʏ}$ʀ/ |
| | oeu | oeuf | /œf/ | /œf/ |
| | oei | oeil | /œj/ | /œj/ |
| | ue | cueille | /kœj/ | /kœj/ |

Note: The /œ/ has retained the diphthong sound in words ending in -eur.

| *Phoneme* | *Symbol* | *Example* | *Pronunciation* | *Canadian French* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /ə/ | e | sera | /səʀa/ | /səʀa/ |
|  | ai | faisant | /fəzɑ̃/ | /fəzɑ̃/ or /fɛzɑ̃/ |
|  | on | monsieur | /məsjø/ | /məsjø/ or sometimes /mɔ̃sjø/ |
| /œ̃/ | un | un | /œ̃/ | /œ̃/ or /ɛ̃/ |
|  | um | parfum | /paʀfœ̃/ | /paʀfœ̃ or /parfɛ̃/ |
| /ɛ̃/ | im | impossible | /ɛ̃pɔsibl/ | /ɛ̃pɔsibl/ or /ɛ̃pɔs$^{\text{I}}$b/ or /ɛ̃pɔs$^{\text{I}}$bl/ |
|  | in | vin | /vɛ̃/ | /vɛ̃/ |
|  | ain | vain | /vɛ̃/ | /vɛ̃/ |
|  | aim | faim | /fɛ̃/ | /fɛ̃/ |
|  | ein | sein | /sɛ̃/ | /sɛ̃/ |
|  | eim | Reims | /ʀɛ̃s/ | /ʀɛ̃s/ |
|  | en | viens | /vjɛ̃/ | /vjɛ̃/ sometimes /hjɛ̃/ |
|  | yn | synchronique | /sɛ̃krɔnik/ | /sɛ̃krɔnik/ |
|  | ym | symphonie | /sɛ̃fɔni/ | /sɛ̃fɔni/ |

Note: The /ɛ̃/ is often nasalized to a greater degree in Canadian French and sounds much more closed than in Standard French. /ɛ̃pɔsibl/ would sound more like /ẽpɔsibl/.

---

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /ɔ̃/ | om | comprendre | /kɔ̃pʀɑ̃dʀ/ | /kɔ̃pʀɑ̃dʀ/ or /kɔ̃prɑ̃d/ |
|  | on | dont | /dɔ̃/ | /dɔ̃/ |

Note once more the tendency to drop the final consonant cluster /dʀ/ to /d/. A diphthong may appear and give /kɔ̃prɑ̃$^{u}$d/. The same may appear in words such as demande, allemande, Fernande, etc.

| *Phoneme* | *Symbol* | *Example* | *Pronunciation* | *Canadian French* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /ɑ̃/ | an | an | /ɑ̃/ | /ɑ̃/ |
| | am | chambre | /ʃɑ̃bʀ/ | /ʃɑ̃bʀ/ or /ʃɑ̃b/<br>or /ʃɑ̃ᵘb/ |
| | en | en | /ɑ̃/ | /ɑ̃/ |
| | em | ensemble | /ɑ̃sɑ̃bl/ | /ɑ̃sɑ̃bl/ or /ɑ̃sɑ̃b/<br>or /ɑ̃sɑ̃ᵘb/ |

---

Note that the tendency towards the use of diphthongs appears even among nasal vowels. These deviations from Standard French are found mainly among speakers of what is known as 'joual'.

There are many other differences which do not appear here. A person wanting to learn Canadian French must listen very closely. Word boundaries differ in the spoken chain of Canadian French, as does intonation. Sentences such as this one spoken by a Frenchman: "il est allé la voir ce soir" would probably sound like this: /jetaleawɛraswɛᶦr/ instead of /ilɛtalelavwaʀsəswaʀ/.

*The consonant sounds of Canadian French*

Most consonant sounds produced in French Canada are the same as those of Standard French. However, depending on the position of these consonants in the word or the spoken chain, there may be variants. We have already mentioned the dropping of the /l/ in /tab/ and the /ʀ/ in words like arbre /arb/.

The /t/ and /d/ sounds before /i/ and /y/ become /tsi/ and /tsy/ and /dzi/ and /dsy/. Thus /pəti/ is pronounced /pətsi/, /dy/ is pronounced /dzy/. This is common in French Canada. This introduction of an /s/ sound after a /t/ or of a /z/ after a /d/ leads to palatalization. Tiens bien! would sound as /kjɛ̃bẽ/. Add to this a tendency to run consonant sounds together in words such as "institution" and one may well hear /ɛ̃ssysjɔ̃/.

The /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ sounds in initial position have a tendency to be replaced by /h/ in some speakers. Je ne sais pas might sound like this: /hsepɑ/. Je vois bien might sound as: /hwebɛ̃/. The /h/ may be sonorized or not depending upon what follows. Note also that the /j/ sound disappears in the word bien which becomes /bɛ̃/.

The /v/ sound is oftentimes replaced by /w/. /vwar/ becomes /wɛr/ or /wɛ$^{\mathrm{I}}$r/. The same happens in "boire" which becomes /bwɛ$^{\mathrm{I}}$r/.

The /l/ as already mentioned is dropped at the end of words. "Elle est allée la voir" may be heard as: /a etale a wɛɪr/, which indicates a tendency to drop the /l/ in the spoken chain.

The /ʀ/ sound in Canada varies from the rolled to the uvular. The rolled /r/ is pronounced by a flip of the tongue on the teeth very much like a Scottish rolled /r/ or a Spanish /r/. When a person uses the uvular /ʀ/ in Canada it is said of this person "qu'il grasseye" or "qu'il parle gras!"

## *Morphology*

The French language in Canada has adopted or kept many words to suit its needs. Some of these words may be archaic in France but still function very well in Canada. It would not be possible here to enumerate them all and an interested person might well consult Gérard Dagenais's Dictionnaire des Difficultés de la Langue Française au Canada, Québec, Editions Pédagogia Inc., 1967. Another source of information is Victor Barbeau's Le Français du Canada, Québec, Garneau, 1970.

### *Le Joual*

Le Joual is a language. It functions very well among those who speak it. It is far from being Academic French and is not the language taught or to be taught in schools but it is common among many French Canadians. It is a result of poor articulation, exaggeration of tendencies mentioned above, and of the introduction into the language of a greater number of faulty grammatical constructions and English words. Augustin Turenne has published a small book entitled "Petit Dictionnaire du Joual au Français, Montréal, Editions de l'Homme, 1962, which attempts to summarize the mistakes made by speakers who use it. It is well worth studying.

### *Le Franglais*

In bilingual areas, where English is the language of work but where minority French groups are still numerous and use French daily, there is a language used which borrows words from English all the while integrating them into the French sentence as "frenchyfied" words. Thus, borrowed verbs will adopt a French conjugation usually in -er-. Bother becomes bâdrer... to dump becomes dumper; to load, loader; etc... Gender is given to these words, usually the same gender as would have been that of the French word had it been known. La charge... becomes la load... le camion becomes le truck, etc. An example of this might be a sentence like: "Load le truck et back le dans la ditch." Another example: "Il a perdu le runner de sa sleigh." This type of communication is not at all uncommon in Western Canada and even though the language is neither French nor English, it sounds French and communicates very well. This phenomenon happens to other language groups as well in Western Canada. A new environment oftentimes leaves a speaker short of the proper word in his language to name an object or an action, so he borrows from the surrounding culture.

### *L'Acadien*

This language was spoken and still is by the Acadians who live in the

Maritimes. Isolated for many years from France and from Quebec, the Acadians have kept alive the old language brought from the Western Provinces of France by their forefathers. This language goes back to Rabelais and is extremely rich in vocabulary and proverbs. Anyone who has heard Antonine Maillet's La Sagouine knows how different Acadian French is from Quebec French. A sentence like the following shows all the savour of the dialect:

> Ils pouvont ben nous trouver guenilloux: je portons les capots usés qu'ils nous avont baillés ... (p. 1. La Sagouine, Ottawa, Coll. Léméac, 1971.)

## *Le Franco-métis*

Very few people alive today speak this form of French which at one time was the "lingua franca" of the West. It was a colourful language spoken by the descendants of the coureurs de bois. The influence of Indian dialects was evident in some of the sentence structures, but the language itself was French with a peculiar intonation and a vowel system very close to that of the Canadian French. Some scholars have only recently become interested in researching this language.

## *Conclusion*

A paper such as this one cannot hope to explain all of the differences that exist between the French language as spoken in Canada and standard French. It is hoped that teachers and students alike in studying these differences will understand the complexity of language, and use these differences to enhance their study of French. Languages are alive and ever-changing. A comparison of these two forms of French should help both students and teachers understand some of the forces at work, within the language itself which contribute to their differences.

# A GUIDE TO EVALUATION IN THE FRENCH PROGRAM

(preliminary edition)

Dr. Douglas Parker

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## A GUIDE TO EVALUATION IN THE FRENCH PROGRAM

### Introduction

The following statements are all suspect from a pedagogical point of view. In the pages which follow, each point will be discussed to a greater or lesser degree. You might like to read them through as a form of pre-test. In case you question any of the statements, the author has heard every one of them at one time or another, perhaps not in those exact words.

1. "I only test my kids' oral production once a year at the end of the term. It just takes too long to do."

2. "A dictée is really a good test of their listening ability. The only thing that I don't understand is why only the best ones get good marks."

3. "The principal said that I should use the test that M. Létourneau made up last year. He said that it didn't matter if we changed the texts in the meantime."

4. "I don't understand it. John got such a good mark on his audio discrimination test and in his oral test, but when he has to talk to people outside he just doesn't seem to understand what they are saying."

5. "Miss Jones says that you should repeat the questions several times. They get better marks."

6. "It's so hard to test culture. My teacher had us mark all the rivers of France on a map and match the titles of books with their authors. I just don't bother."

7. "You don't suppose that I should have our tape recorder fixed do you, before we have the listening comprehension test? Miss Jones next door doesn't even bother to use one. She reads all the statements to her class. Maybe that's why her kids get better marks."

8. "I asked the principal to move us to another room for the aural test because the workmen are redoing the wall next door, but he says that it doesn't matter because the other classes are doing their test in the gym while the grade sevens write math, so it will even out."

9. "Miss Jones. I hear that you are letting your students take your unit tests until they get a good mark on them. How am I going to be able to tell the parents where their child stands in the class if you do that?"

10. "It will be easy to mark the tapes that the students make because the student's tape recorder will copy both the question and the student's answer."

11. "It was embarrassing when Johnny's mother came to the school. I was waiting until November to give my tests. She said that he had done really well on the test in Science, and why wasn't he doing as well in French."

12. "I heard all about a new type of communication test at the teachers' in-service last week, and I'm going to try it on the exam tomorrow."

13. "Do you know what those wretched children wanted? They wanted the instructions written in English. I asked them what language they thought we were studying."

14. "I always make up a totally new exam every time. That way they can't get any help from their older brothers and sisters."

15. "They just did terribly on that last test. Not a single one of them could conjugate 'être'. Well, we'll just have to go on anyway."

16. "Am I ever glad to be finished marking those exams. It's a good thing that I don't ever have to look at them again."

## EVALUATION AND TESTING

### Introduction

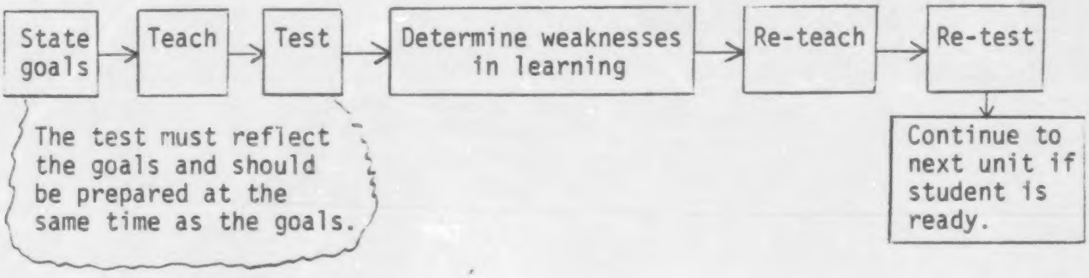
In this discussion, 'testing' will be used to refer to the process of determining how well the student has mastered the content of the program. 'Evaluation', on the other hand, will be used to describe the end result: an assessment of the effectiveness of the teacher and of the French program itself.

### Purposes of testing

1. To provide input into the evaluation.
2. Diagnosis of individual or group weaknesses, deficiencies, or errors in understanding.
3. Review of materials already learned.
4. Selection, grouping, and placement of students.
5. Determining whether or not students are ready to proceed to the next level of work.
6. Practice in taking tests.
7. Motivation or incentive for increased effort on the part of the student.

### The Teaching For Mastery Model

In planning an effective instructional sequence, the following model should be kept in mind.


State goals
Teach
Test
Determine weaknesses in learning
Re-teach
Re-test
Continue to next unit if student is ready.
The test must reflect the goals and should be prepared at the same time as the goals.

## TYPES OF TESTS

Modern language tests commonly are divided into aptitude tests, progress tests, achievement or proficiency tests, and tests of cultural attitude and awareness.

### Aptitude Tests

Aptitude tests attempt to give an indication of how successful a student will be in learning a second language. Used alone they may give a faulty indication, since they do not measure student attitude to learning a second language, but rather the extent to which he possesses the skills which are felt to be necessary. This problem may be overcome to some extent by taking into account as well student progress in subjects such as English, Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies. Aptitude tests have little application in most language programs in Alberta except in those cases when it may become necessary to select a certain number of students for a specific language program, or when it is desired to match experimental and control students for research purposes.

### Progress Tests

Progress tests are usually based on a specific text or program and are usually given either at the end of a unit or at the end of a term. While they are most frequently teacher-made, publishers are beginning to include them as one component of their French programs. It is this type of test with which we are most concerned in the present discussion.

### Achievement or Proficiency Tests

Achievement or proficiency tests are not based on any specific French program, although they may take the content of several programs into account. Achievement tests look to the past history of the student, and attempt to determine where he stands in relation to other students who have followed different programs. The tests which have been and are being developed by Alberta Education in the field of French are examples of such tests.

Proficiency tests, on the other hand, look to the future. These tests are often used as placement tests to determine the level at which a student should be placed when he moves to a new school, or they may be used as an indicator of the student's ability to carry out certain types of tasks in job situations which require the use of the language which he has studied.

### Tests of Cultural Awareness and Attitude

If we accept that the student with an integrative motivation toward the people whose language he is learning will learn the language more effectively, then we need to have some idea of the strength of this motivation. More important, it is helpful to be able to measure the extent to which this attitude is changing as a result both of the French program and of other factors. This is the role of tests of cultural attitude and awareness.

## IMPORTANT FACTORS IN PREPARING OR SELECTING TEST INSTRUMENTS

For the following discussion to be meaningful an explanation of certain terms pertaining to test instruments and their use may be necessary. Many of these terms may be considered as pairs.

### Validity and Reliability

A test item or instrument is said to be valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure. To take an example, a gallon jug would not be a valid instrument for measuring wheat, while a bushel measure would be, even though the two instruments appear similar.

A test item or instrument is said to be reliable if it will produce essentially the same results every time it is used, assuming that no further learning has taken place and that there has been no forgetting. To use the examples just given, in their respective fields, both the gallon jug and the bushel measure should measure a gallon or a bushel accurately time after time.

### Global and Discrete Point Test Items

A test item may be global in nature when it measures a combination of several very specific skills. For example, when the student is asked to respond to the question, "Quelle heure est-il?" with a complete sentence answer, we are assessing his aural comprehension, his ability to tell time, his ability to count in the second language, and his grasp of the sentence structures involved. Depending on our grading system we may also choose to evaluate the quality of his pronunciation.

A discrete point test item focuses on a single aspect of the language system. For example, we may ask the student to read aloud the sentence "Il y a une plume brune dans la rue." and in grading the response we would focus only on the student's pronunciation of the Phoneme (y) as 'une'. Errors in other aspects of his pronunciation would be ignored, at least for the moment.

### Mixed Skill and Single Skill Test Items

One of the more popular test items is one in which the student hears a statement or is asked a question, and then is asked to look at his answer book to find the printed statement which is the best response. The test is considered to be a test of aural comprehension, but because the student has to read the possible alternatives, the test is actually one demanding two skills, listening and reading, as a result of which it is classed as a mixed skill test. If the student is unable to read, he would be unable to pass the test even though his aural comprehension were faultless.

A single skill test item attempts to require only one skill on the part of the student. In a test of phonemic discrimination, i.e., the ability to tell whether or not two words which the student hears said aloud are the same word repeated twice or two totally different words, the student is being asked to deal only with one skill at a time. This type of skill-testing approach is more appropriate in the early stages of a French program or for use in diagnostic situations.

## Linguistic Competence and Linguistic Performance

Linguistic competence is the ability of the student to demonstrate understanding of specific language skills. Linguistic performance takes place when the student combines these skills in a communication situation. In the example "Quelle heure est-il?", the student's ability to use the appropriate intonation in asking the question is an example of linguistic competence. The fact that he can use the question to derive information in the appropriate situation is an example of linguistic performance.

## Normative and Criterion-Referenced Tests

Norm-referenced tests assume that the students' results can be distributed in some fashion so that in large numbers their results will follow a normal statistical curve. In the case of standardized tests, these norms will be available in the manual that accompanies the test. In the case of teacher-made tests, the teacher will have to work out the distribution of letter grades. The purpose of such tests is to determine where the students stand in relation to each other on the basis of their work. Such tests are usually administered on a once a term, or once a year basis usually for the purpose of reporting. Students are then allowed to continue, even if their marks are occasionally quite low.

Criterion-referenced tests, on the other hand, are tests in which the student must attain a specific level before being allowed to continue. A driving test is an example of such an examination. In the ideal situation, the student works with the material until he can pass the criterion. As a result, failure at the upper levels is rarer, and motivation is higher. Criterion-referenced tests may be administered whenever the student feels that he is ready.

There is another major difference in the test items themselves. In the norm-referenced tests, items which everyone gets correct or which everyone gets wrong are eliminated. Desirable items are those which a few, some, or a great many, but not all of the students get right. It is this factor which allows students to be distributed along a continuum. In the criterion-referenced test on the other hand items which everyone gets wrong are eliminated, since they reflect failure of the test to match the program goals. Desirable items are those which match program goals. It is also important that all program goals be tested in some form or other, because the purpose of the test is not reporting or feedback, but to determine whether or not the student is ready to continue. The test does constitute feedback to the extent that the student and teacher are made aware of the fact that the student has arrived at a certain stage in language learning.

## Coverage and Economy

These two are the final factors that we shall consider. They are more independent than the others which have been discussed, but are related to the extent that a test which covers all the goals of the program may turn out to be somewhat expensive to administer in terms of material, staff time, and pupil time. The danger then is that the testing of a particular skill may demand such a complicated or expensive (in terms of time) testing process that the School System or the teacher may be tempted to place the major emphasis on something that can be tested with a paper and pencil instrument. The end result will be a shift in the priorities in the program itself.

For the reasons just given it is important that an evaluation program examine all four skills. In addition, the emphasis placed on each skill in the tests should reflect the importance attached to that skill in the statement of program goals.

## CRITERIA FOR AN EFFECTIVE EVALUATION

In planning an evaluation of the school's French program and in planning the actual tests, the following points should be kept in mind:

1. The weight given to test items which assess various language skills should reflect the importance attached to these same skills in the program's objectives. The distribution of marks among the various skill-testing items should also take into account the time spent in developing each skill and concept during the past term.

2. In order to help to ensure that each test item measures exactly what it is supposed to measure (see Validity on page 4) the emphasis in each item should be on a single skill or concept. This is especially important if at some later date the results of the question are to be used for diagnostic and remedial purposes.

3. The student must not be penalized for failure to understand the test's directions. If problems in comprehension will occur in using the second language to give instructions for each test item, then the student's first language should be used. It is also important that the instructions, even in the first language, be clearly understandable.

If possible, to avoid problems such as those just described, try out the test instructions on a student from another school, or at least on a colleague. Ask for feedback as to problem areas. If this is not possible, put the test away for two weeks, then re-read it yourself to see if it still makes sense.

4. In planning the actual test format, arrange the items in increasing order of difficulty. This allows the student to get to the questions which he can answer correctly while he still has confidence. In addition, ensure that students have enough time to complete the test. Bright, highly-motivated students are particularly upset when they find that they have insufficient time to complete questions to which they know the answers.

5. Testing areas and conditions should be set up in such a way as to ensure that results obtained from the same test given in different classrooms will be reliable. In particular, the equipment used for aural comprehension tests must be of good quality from the point of view of sound reproduction. 'Muddy' sound results in unfair comparisons between both classes and students. It is grossly unfair to administer the same test in two different classrooms using a good quality machine in one and poor equipment in the other.

In addition, the space used for testing aural comprehension must be as free from extraneous noise as possible. External noise conveys an unfair advantage to those students seated near the tape recorder. Ideally all students should have equal access to good quality sound during taped tests. If a good language laboratory is available, this will provide an excellent solution to the problem.

6. Tests should be administered at fairly frequent intervals during the term, since an individual's scores will give a more reliable picture over time than when obtained on a one-shot basis at one or two times during the term. Short, frequent quizzes (given once or twice a week) will ensure that students keep up with their work, but more important, and this is their main purpose, the results from such quizzes will indicate to the teacher and to the student those areas which have not been thoroughly mastered, and which require further attention. The teacher should not take class time to mark quizzes, since this practice usually creates discipline problems. In addition, the teacher must be aware of the specific problems being encountered in order to plan appropriate remedial instruction.

7. In tests of oral production it helps if the student's response can be tape-recorded. In this way, the tape may be replayed several times and marked for different skills, something which is virtually impossible for even a thoroughly tested evaluator to do while listening to a student. The tapes may also be marked over a period of time thereby allowing the evaluator to stop when tired. The tapes will also be available for comparison purposes at a later date.

Since tape recorded testing only requires a sympathetic but reliable person to start and stop the machine and measure the elapsed time, at least for most types of tests of oral production, this task can be carried out by a teacher's aide, parent volunteer, or student from another grade level, freeing the teacher to continue work with the rest of the class.

It is appreciated that this might not be possible in some schools, but the advantages of tape recording student responses should be considered. Where a language laboratory of the audio-active type is available, an entire class may be tested at one time. The only caution here is that the individual booths must be checked very carefully to ensure that they are functioning, and the tapes checked immediately after to ensure that the student's answers were recorded.

8. While oral production takes a long time to test, in most programs this is a high-priority skill. For this reason, tests of this skill should include testing strategies which will elicit a fairly large amount of oral speech in the second language which, if tape recorded, can then be analyzed from different points of view.

## TESTING PROCEDURES

### Introduction

Tests in second languages may be thought of as comprising three major areas:

a) Linguistic competence

b) Communicative performance

c) Cultural and affective awareness

Within each of the major areas there are the obvious sub-divisions which themselves may be tested either individually or in group tests using pencil and paper strategies.

### Tests of Linguistic Competence

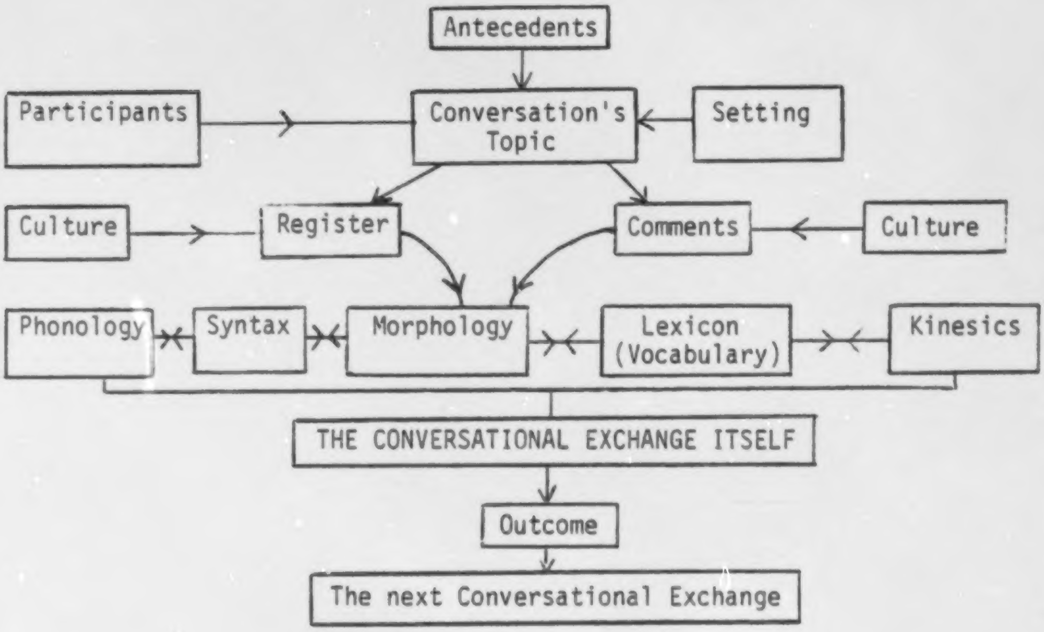
Tests of this nature attempt to determine the extent to which the student has mastery of specific linguistic concepts, such as sentence structure, phonemic contrasts, and vocabulary. These tests usually take the form of discrete point tests, tests of each building block as it were. The various categories involved may be outlined as shown on the chart below (D.P. Harris. Testing English As a Second Language, p.11)

| Component Content | Language Skills | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Listening | Speaking | Reading | Writing |
| Phonology/ Orthography | | | | |
| Sentence Structure | | | | |
| Vocabulary | | | | |

## Tests of Communicative Performance

These tests attempt to determine how well the student can use the language to understand and to impart information. As a result, they will be more global in nature, since even the simplest linguistic interchange is an extremely complex affair, as the accompanying table shows.

The Life Cycle Of A Conversational Exchange


Antecedents
Participants
Conversation's Topic
Setting
Culture
Register
Comments
Culture
Phonology
Syntax
Morphology
Lexicon (Vocabulary)
Kinesics
THE CONVERSATIONAL EXCHANGE ITSELF
Outcome
The next Conversational Exchange

In the past we have been more successful with tests of linguistic competence than we have been with communication-type tests. In the diagram above, each of the individual components may be thought of as a testable item, while the communication event involved implies the totality expressed by this diagram, in other words a real life situation. Essentially, then, communicative performance is the ability to obtain or impart information, to express feelings, or to relate to others in a verbal fashion. Obviously cultural awareness and attitude will form a part of this totality, since cultural offence will nullify the communication process depending on the degree of seriousness of the problem involved. Testing cultural attitude and awareness is a separate problem which will be discussed below.

## Testing Cultural Attitude and Awareness

The testing of culture involves two distinct categories: cultural knowledge or understanding, and cultural attitude. The former is essentially cognitive, while the latter is affective in nature. The former can be tested fairly easily, while the latter can only be determined accurately on the basis of observation, and that over time. It must be admitted that there are attitude tests which give an indication of growth over time, but these are most effectively used as indicators of group attitude change rather than change in the individual.

## SAMPLE TEST ITEMS

### Test Item Construction

Test items may be divided into several types. Once the rationale for each of these is understood, it is easy to create a suitable item to test a specific skill. Briefly, these types are as follows:

1) Closed vs. open-ended.

A closed item provides the student with several alternative responses from which he is to choose the most suitable, whereas in an open-ended one the student himself provides the most appropriate response. It should be noted, however, that an open-ended item may be constructed in such a way that there is only one correct response possible.

2) Little selection vs. considerable selection

Open-ended items, as just mentioned, may provide essentially no freedom of choice, or may permit a great deal of variety in the answer format. The former is more true of tests of linguistic competence, while the latter is more often found in communication tests. An example is given in the following illustration.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Little control over content and format | ↔ | | Considerable control over content and format |
| e.g., | Comment as-tu passé tes vacances? | | e.g., | Quelle heure est-il? |
| | response ____________ | | | response ____________ |

Open-ended questions may control for format, but not for content, and vice versa. Alternatively, as indicated above, they may control for both content and format or for neither.

On the following pages will be found samples of different types of test formats. The purpose of each type is given followed by an example, usually in the form of the directions for the question and an example question 0 which would be used to show the student how to do the question. Finally, some important points to notice about the type of question under consideration will be made.

These sample questions are presented solely to give some idea of the range that is available. For a very detailed discussion of the different types of questions as well as a thorough discussion of testing and evaluation, the teacher is referred to the book by Rebecca Valette mentioned in the bibliography.

## TESTS OF AURAL COMPREHENSION

Tests of aural comprehension may be divided into two types: those which merely require the student to demonstrate the ability to discriminate between two phonemes and which therefore do not require the ability to understand what is said (although this helps), and tests which require such comprehension. Both types of test are outlined below, with detailed examples:

1. Tests requiring phonemic discrimination only :
    a. The phonemes are imbedded in a single word.
    b. The phonemes are imbedded in a longer speech sequence.
2. Tests requiring understanding of what is said - closed tests:
    a. Indicating the presence or absence of a grammatical feature.
    b. Multiple choice
        i. The construction of a multiple choice item
        ii. Response to a question
        iii. Reaction to a conversation overheard
        iv. Selection of appropriate dialogue lines in a telephone call or other conversation
        v. The use of visuals as the multiple choices.
3. Tests requiring understanding of what is said - constructed responses :
    a. Non-verbal performance of the statement contained in the test item
    b. Single word response
    c. Sentence response.

Examples of each of these test items are given on the following pages. The teacher is reminded that these are sample formats only, designed to show the teacher how to construct similar items more appropriate to the teacher's own class.

1a. Phonemic discrimination - phoneme imbedded in a single word

In this and in the other samples, the appropriate instructions from the student's question paper will be given as well as a section from the answer sheet.

> Directions: You will hear three words one after the other. If all three are the same word merely repeated three times, circle the number 1 beside the question number on your answer sheet. If one of the repetitions is a different word, circle the number 2.

e.g., In question one the student might hear the following:

"roue, roue, roue." and he would mark his answer sheet as shown -

1. [✓ 1] 2

In question two he might hear:

"bu, bu, boue." and he would mark his sheet -

2. 1 [✓ 2]

Points to notice

1. If the student cannot read in the second language as of this point, any examples will have to be given orally, preferably using a male and a female voice to make clear what is instruction, and what is test item.

2. Meaning is not involved in any way in this question. To this extent, then, it is a fairly 'pure' question. If the student can distinguish between the phonemes, he will be able to do the question.

3. Instructions are given in English which helps to ensure that the student will be able to do the question provided only that he has the necessary skill to do so.

4. In the field of auditory discrimination this is the simplest test form, since we are dealing with short segments of sound in what is essentially a minimal-pair situation (i.e., two words which differ in meaning only because of a single phoneme).

5. There is little or no demand made on aural memory. If it is desired to introduce this aspect, the following format should be considered.

This format retains the simplicity of the single word, but requires the student to indicate which of several repetitions is the one that is different from the others.

Directions: You will hear three words one after the other. If all three are the same word merely repeated three times, circle the number 4 beside the question number on your answer sheet. If one of the words is different from the other two, circle its number.

Question

1. 1 2 3 4

2. 1 2 3 4

In question one the student will hear the following:

"1. roue, roue, rue." and he would circle - 1. 1 2 [✓ 3] 4

In question two he would hear:

"2. bu, bu, bu." and he would circle - 2. 1 2 3 [✓ 4]

1b. Phonemic discrimination - longer speech sequences

If the phonemic difference is imbedded in sentence-length utterances the pressure on the student is much greater, because he must rely on auditory memory to a much greater degree. If he does understand the meaning of the sentence, his problem is made that much easier. As a result, this type of format may be regarded as a transition between the ones just given, and those which follow. The actual item might appear as follows:

Directions: You will hear a man's voice read a sentence. You will then hear a woman's voice read three sentences, one of which will be the sentence that the man read. Circle the letter following the question number which corresponds to the sentence which the man read. For example, you will hear:

C'est un bel été. ← If the students can read then the example can be printed.

You will then hear a woman's voice saying:

a. C'est un bel état.
b. C'est un bel été.
c. C'était un bel été.

See the note above.

You would mark your answer sheet as follows:

Question

1. a [✓ b] c

Since 'b' was the answer that matched what the man said.

Points to notice

1. The item relies heavily on the student's ability to remember what he has heard. To the extent that he understands the meaning he will be able to answer the question. It is virtually impossible to answer this question without understanding the meaning, hence it is strictly speaking not a pure test of phonemic discrimination.

2. It is essential to have two completely different voices for the directions and the examples, as well as the question numbers and the items themselves.

3. If the student cannot read the examples given in French, it is especially important that the teacher ensure that the directions given orally are understood, since this question is much more difficult than those which preceded it. It should be noted that if the choices themselves are given in printed form, then this becomes a test of reading as well.

### 2a. Items requiring understanding - closed responses - indicating presence or absence of a feature

The tests which are given below differ from the items just described, in that to do them successfully the student must comprehend what is being said. At the same time, these tests still rely on a single sound difference. As a result of this insistence on two skills they are regarded as 'mixed' tests.

Tests such as these may be used to determine the student's ability to differentiate between verb tenses, persons, and gender and plurality. Their purpose is to determine the extent to which he can make use of the important sound signals in the conveying of meaning.

Directions:- You will hear a series of sentences. You must decide whether the sentence that you hear talks about one person or more than one person. If the sentence talks about one person, circle the number 1 on your answer sheet. If it talks about more than one, circle the ⌿ sign. For example you might hear:

Ils finissent les leçons.

More than one person is involved so you would mark your answer sheet as shown below.

Question

1. 1 [✓ +]

The same type of test format may be used with masculine and feminine signals, for example:

Mon amie est grande.

Question

1. M [✓ F]

The actual instructions would be similar to the question shown at the top of the page.

All the items given above are appropriate only in the beginning stages of language learning. By the end of level one their use should no longer be necessary, since it is assumed that beyond this point the student is able to make all the necessary phonemic distinctions. From this point on this type of test item should be used only for diagnostic purposes.

### 2b i. Items requiring understanding - Multiple choice - Construction

The most common type of aural comprehension test requiring actual comprehension is the multiple choice format. The options open to the student may be given in oral form, or if the student knows how to read without any difficulty the answers may be printed. The teacher must be very sure that reading problems will not interfere with the student's ability to answer the question. If there is the least doubt, the answers should be read aloud on the tape as well as printed on the answer sheet. If the answers are only read aloud, and not printed, there is the danger that the test becomes one of auditory memory.

A multiple choice test is usually constructed in the following way:

A question is asked, or a statement is made, to which the student is asked to find the most suitable answer. This condition is included, because inadvertently the answer options given may fit by applying a different logic. This will be demonstrated in a minute. In the options open to the student no option should be so ridiculous that no one would choose it. (This is one of the reasons for doing an error count after the tests have all been marked.) A typical question (based on Paul Pimsleur's tests) is given below.

Directions: You will first hear a question. On your answer sheet you will find four possible answers which will be read to you while you look at your answer sheet. Choose the answer which you feel is the most suitable. Circle its letter on the answer sheet opposite the question number.

e.g., The student might hear: - Quel temps fait-il au mois de juillet?

The alternatives on his paper would be: -

1. a. Aujourd'hui. (This is simply an irrelevant answer, but it still looks appropriate.)
   b. Assez chaud. (The correct answer.)
   c. Six heures et demie. (Chosen by students who think 'temps' means 'time'.)
   d. Oui, mais il est parti. (For pupils who are lead by the 'il' in the question and know the answer should start the same way.)

Points to note

Considerable care must be taken in the preparation of the possible answers, as the following example will demonstrate. This example points up the need of preparing the question, then trying it out on someone else while you ask them for their rationale for each question. Alternatively the test should be put away for a few weeks and then you should do it yourself. The problems that you encounter on your own test may come as a surprise.

The test item given below is unique in that a class can provide a reasonable rationale for each response. This is why the proviso 'the most suitable answer' must always be included in the instructions.

The student hears the following question: Tu es fatigué?

and his alternatives along with his rationale for the answer are:

a. Oui, je vais travailler (and the thought of work always makes me tired).

b. Bien sûr. Il est minuit. (Correct answer) (However, some children reject this on the grounds that they are night people and that is when they really come to life.)

c. Non, je nage seulement en hiver (and that's why I'm not tired now).

d. Oui, Jean regarde la télévision (and I can't get to sleep).

Oddly enough, 'd' is one of the more popular choices even among students who totally comprehend the various possibilities.

2b ii. Items requiring understanding - Selecting a response to a question.

The sample given above (albeit with somewhat more carefully chosen alternatives) is typical of this type of test item. The following might serve as replacements:

Tu es fatigué?

a. Oui, il y a eu un accident devant la maison à trois heures du matin.

b. Oui, mon frère est parti juste avant le dîner.

c. Non, je regarde toujours les photos de Jean.

d. Oui, je prends toujours ce livre-là.

2b iii. Items requiring understanding - reaction to a conversation overheard

Instead of using questions and answers as in the previous example, the student may be asked to listen to a conversation which is taking place, then to react to several test items based on the conversation. The following is an example.

Directions: You will hear a conversation taking place between two people. You will then be asked some questions about the conversation. Choose the answer among each group of alternatives which best matches the information which you obtained during the conversation.

Voice 1: (female) Marie, viens ici. Regarde ta chambre: tes livres sont sur le plancher, tes jouets sont sur le lit, et il y a de la poussière partout. Ferme la télévision tout de suite.

Voice 2: (female) Mais Maman, c'est mon programme favori. Le petit Robert y jouait pendant la visite de ton amie, Madame Thibault.

Student answer sheet

1. La mère de Marie est a) contente, b) vieille c) la mère de Robert d) irritée.
2. La chambre de Marie est a) près de la télévision b) en désordre c) bien propre.

3. Robert est a) le frère de Marie b) plus âgé que Marie c) plus jeune que Marie.

### 2b iv. Items requiring understanding - Participating in a telephone conversation

In this type of test, the student hears one side of a telephone conversation and participates by selecting the most appropriate next line in the conversation by choosing the most suitable comment from among the various alternatives given in his test booklet.

Directions: You will hear part of a telephone conversation. The person on the telephone will make a comment or ask a question, and from the choices shown on your examination paper you must choose the best response. Circle the letter that corresponds to it on your answer sheet.

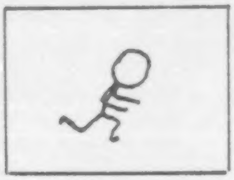
| Tape | Student examination booklet | Answer sheet |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Ici Paul. Tu es rentré sans accident? | a) Non, ma voiture est dans le garage.<br>b) Non, j'ai eu un ennui.<br>c) Oui, Marie regarde la TV avec moi. | 1. a [✓ b] c |
| 2. Ce n'était pas grave? | a) Si, le programme n'était pas bon.<br>b) Si, nous sommes partis à onze heures.<br>c) Si, les freins ne marchaient plus. | 2. a b [✓ c] |

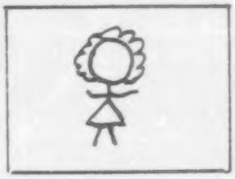
### 2b v. Items requiring understanding - Visuals as alternatives

In another type of aural comprehension test the student selects the picture which most appropriately illustrates the comment made. The examples given below show how this type of test may be applied to different language concepts. (The same caveat about student rationale for selecting a given item should also be taken into account here, as witness the last test item where every good fisherman knows that fish bite better when it's raining.) It should also be noted that there must be at least two options open to the student for each item, and preferably more, since otherwise a single word in the stimulus may give the clue as to which picture to choose even when this is not the important item. For example, if the test were made up as follows, there will be a problem.

The student hears `le garçon court` and the choice is essentially between these two pictures:

a



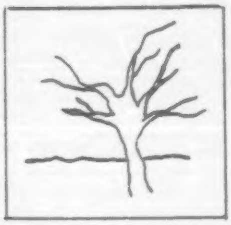


b

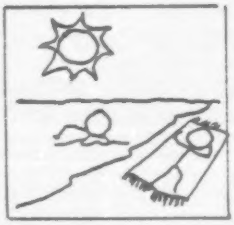
The word 'le garçon' will tell the student which picture to choose even if he doesn't understand the difference between 'court' and 'marche' which is really the point of the test item.

In each of the following examples, the fact that there are four alternatives forces the student to focus on the specific vocabulary problem or other point. As can be seen from the drawings, most of the elements involved are held constant except for the aspect being tested.

1. Comprehension of a common expression, e.g. 'C'est l'été'. The student is asked to mark on his answer sheet the letter which corresponds to the picture which best represents the statement that he has just heard.



a



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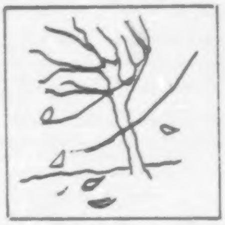

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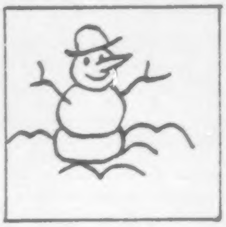
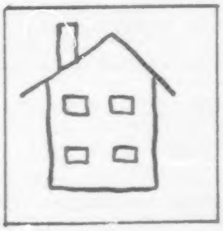
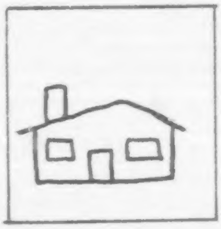


d

2. Comprehension of a specific vocabulary item, e.g. 'J'ai une maison à deux étages'.



a



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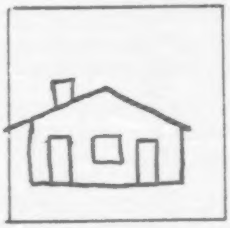

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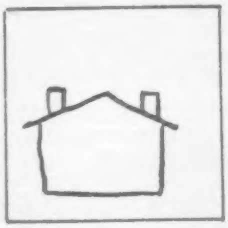

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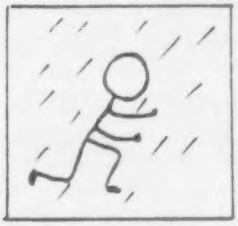
3. Comprehension of a longer utterance, e.g. 'Ceci s'emploie quand il pleut'.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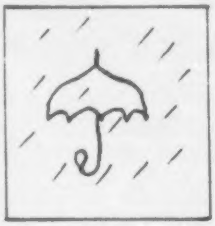
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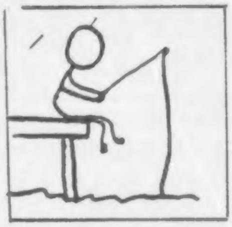
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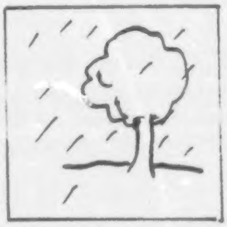

d

Occasionally it is desirable to scramble the pictures from the different questions, in which case the re-arranged items are numbered from 1 to n. This procedure has the advantage that the student must focus on more details of the various pictures in order to select the most appropriate. There is the disadvantage, however, that hunting among a fairly large number of pictures takes time.

### Items requiring understanding - constructed responses

Test items of this type differ from the ones just described in that the student must produce the answer himself, rather than simply choosing from among those listed on the examination paper. To the extent that there is an exchange of information, these items test the communication aspect of aural comprehension in a manner more akin to that of the real world. At the same time, because the form of the response is a very simple one, the emphasis is almost entirely on the comprehension of the test item, and the response is merely a simple way of indicating that comprehension has taken place. There is little chance in this type of test item that the student will encounter difficulty in expressing his or her answer. It should be appreciated that these tests are more individual than those previously described which were group pencil and paper tests.

### 3a. Items requiring understanding - non-verbal responses

Students may be given a series of commands which they are to carry out. They are evaluated on their comprehension of the command, but may also be assessed on the basis of the time lag between the conclusion of the command and the beginning of their complying with it. The fact that some students may need to hear the command twice should also be taken into account. While the commands may be given 'live', to avoid unconscious cueing by the evaluator the commands should be tape recorded. An example for use at a fairly early stage follows:

Donne le petit livre bleu à la fille qui est derrière Paul.

There are six possible test items in this single command, and the student should receive some credit for the parts that he gets right, even though there may be errors in the rest.

3b. Items requiring understanding - single word or short utterance responses

Students may be asked questions to which they reply with a single word or short phrase. Answers may be in either English or French, since the answer serves only to demonstrate that comprehension has taken place, not as an end in itself. While the evaluator could ask for a complete sentence answer, to do so introduces other skills. There is also the danger that should the student not answer the question, we have no way of knowing whether it is the question that he does not understand (which was the goal of our test) or whether he is simply unable to put a sentence together in the second language.

A sample item might appear as follows:

Tape (or evaluator): Où est la petite fille qui porte une jupe rose?

Student: Derrière Paul (or, behind Paul).

# TESTS OF ORAL PRODUCTION

Tests of oral production may be divided into two separate types: tests of linguistic competence and tests of communicative performance. (As was seen in the case of aural comprehension the same division applied there.) Tests of linguistic competence in the area of oral production differ from tests of communicative performance in that the former allow little or no freedom of content choice, while the latter, within certain general restrictions, do. Tests of linguistic competence are designed to evaluate a specific skill; as a result, the answers of almost all students should be very similar. Tests of this nature may be used to assess student control of phonology, morphology, and syntax.

## Testing Linguistic Competence - Phonology

Obviously, tests designed to evaluate phonology may be created expressly for this purpose or may simply involve the use of tests designed for other purposes, which are later re-examined from a phonological viewpoint. The former will be more satisfactory if specific points are involved, or if it is planned to use the test as a diagnostic tool for future remedial work in pronunciation.

If this is the situation, the following format may be useful: The student is given a series of sentences each of which contains an example of the specific problem under study. The student is either asked to repeat the sentence after the examiner, and his utterance is recorded, or he is asked to read the sentence into a tape recorder from a printed page. If the student is asked to repeat after the examiner, the examiner's model should be flawless. In this case, however, the student is being asked to retain the sentence in his memory long enough to repeat it. As a result it is essential that the student comprehend the sentence, since this will affect both his ability to remember it, and his intonation. There is also the problem, albeit somewhat rare, that a good mimic can parrot the examiner's model without really understanding the principles involved. For these reasons it may be preferable to use the sentence in a printed form.

In using a printed form, the student should always be given a moment to look at the sentence before he is asked to say it aloud. Our goal here is to demonstrate that he can, in fact, produce the oral form desired, not that he can do it in so many seconds. Sample sentences might include the following:

1. C'est chaud, la chaussée.

   (The examiner listens only for diphthongization and ignores any other errors. The item is merely marked 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory'.)

2. Robert et Marie ont peur. (Examiner listens for 'r' quality).

3. Il a délégué ses responsabilités. (Examiner tests for syllabic rhythm.)

4. Tu les a vus? (Examiner tests for intonation.)

Obviously the tape could be replayed several times while the examiner checks for other problems, for example, the /y/ in 'vu' in the last item.

## Testing Linguistic Competence - Morphology

Tests of this nature may deal with problems of person, number, gender, or tense. The test items themselves most frequently resemble oral exercises more than test items. The following examples will illustrate this point:

i) To illustrate control of gender agreement.

> Directions: You will hear a sentence which begins with a boy's name. Repeat the same sentence, changing the boy's name to the matching girl's name, and make any other changes necessary. For example, you might hear:
>
> "Louis est petit" and you would say,
>
> Louise est petite.

ii) To illustrate control of number.

> Directions: You will hear a sentence in which the word at the beginning is in the singular. Repeat this sentence, but change the word at the beginning to its plural form. Make any other changes that are necessary. For example, you might hear:
>
> "L'oeil est bleu" and you would say,
>
> Les yeux sont bleus.

iii) To illustrate change in verb form.

> Directions: You will hear a sentence which takes place in the present. Repeat this sentence, but change it to the past. For example, you might hear:
>
> "Je vois mes amis" and you would say,
>
> J'ai vu mes amis.

## Testing Linguistic Competence - Syntax

i) Here the student is asked to make a change in sentence structure, for example, change the sentence which he hears to the negative.

Directions: You will hear a sentence. Repeat this sentence, but change it to the negative form. For example, you might hear:

"Tu les as vus?" and you would answer

Tu ne les as pas vus?

ii) Eliciting complete sentences - Interrogative forms

Sometimes it is necessary to have the student produce a complete sentence structure. The problem here is to show him what you want without giving the answer away. The problem of eliciting a specific question is particularly difficult. There are two ways in which to solve the problem, one of which (essentially belonging more to communicative performance than linguistic competence) involves showing the student a picture and asking him to generate questions about the part of the picture indicated. This is not foolproof, since the question may not be quite the one that the examiner wishes. The other approach has the disadvantage that it is not used in real life, but has the distinct advantage that only the precise question that you want will be produced, thereby making for ease of marking. For example:

Directions: You will hear a statement. Part of the statement will then be repeated. Make up a question that would produce the part that was repeated as an answer. For example, you might hear:

J'étudierai mes leçons la semaine prochaine.

....... la semaine prochaine.

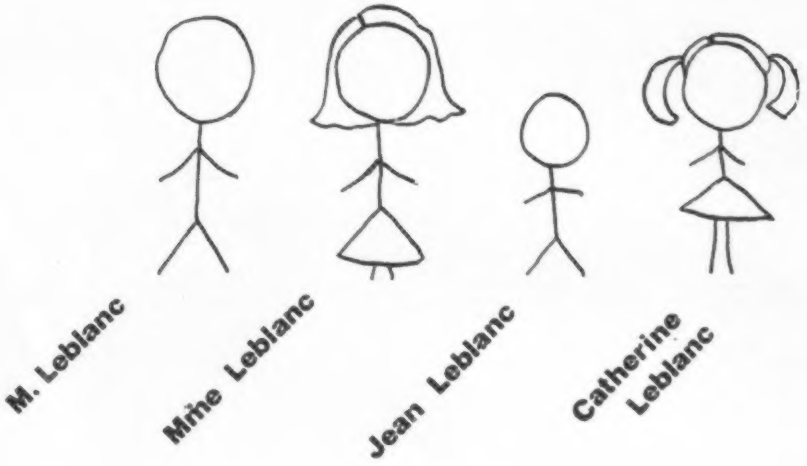
Apparently, the information has to do with 'when' the person will study, so you should ask:

Quand étudierez-vous vos leçons?

iii) Eliciting complete sentences - Statements

If statements are desired, but statements which contain very specific information, then the approach shown on the following page might be used. In this approach, the student is asked to look at a picture or drawing, then reply to questions which he hears on the basis of the content contained in the picture. In this instance the student is asked to assume the role of one of the persons in the picture, and to answer the questions from this point of view.

The student sees this picture:



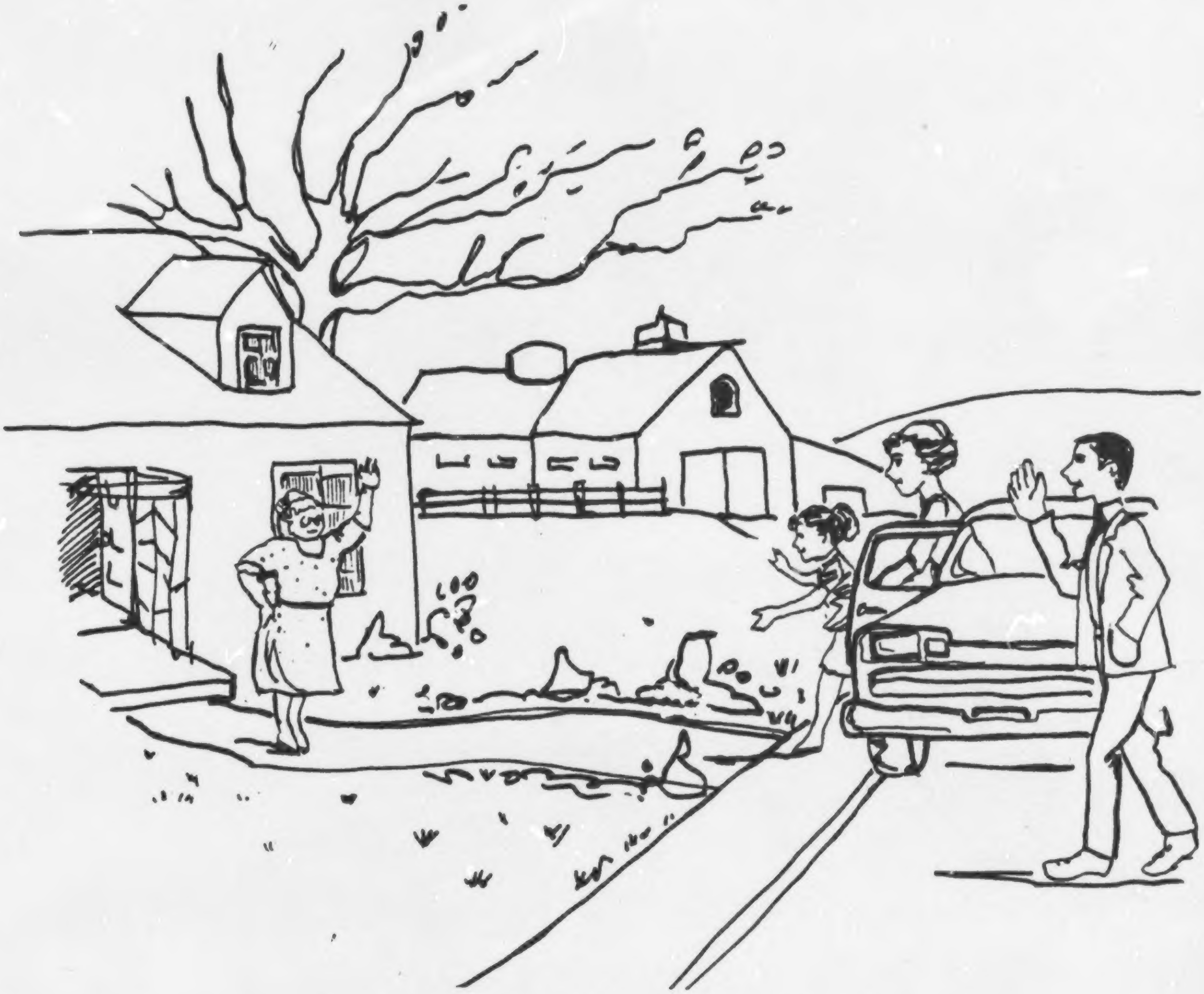
and he hears the following comment: Toi, tu es Jean Leblanc. He is then asked these questions:

1. Tu as des frères?
2. Comment s'appelle ta soeur?
3. Elle est plus jeune que toi?

The student, of course, has been asked to reply with complete sentence answers.

Eliciting a specific tense

Left to his own devices, the student will try to use the present tense unless we can indicate to him that we wish either the future or the past to be used. This can be done very simply by telling him to begin his answer with either 'Hier....' or 'Demain....' depending on what is wanted. For example, if the student is asked to produce three sentences about the accompanying picture, selected so that they tell a story, the result, assuming that the story begins with "Hier...", will be that the student's grasp of the past tenses will be determined. This is not a totally free situation, since the picture will control the vocabulary content of the sentences produced. In turn the vocabulary will control the grammatical structures produced. It must still be appreciated, however, that there is a certain amount of freedom, and the students will produce a fairly wide range of sentences which will differ considerably in level of difficulty.



A good source of such pictures is children's colouring books and magazines.

It should be appreciated that a single picture, such as the one shown on the previous page, presents problems if a continuing narrative is to be produced, since this picture is more likely to produce a static description. However, continuing narrative applies more to communication performance, and is not our concern here.

The picture may also be used as the vehicle for question-answer type test items. The teacher must ensure that the questions are thoroughly understood by the students, or this type of test becomes a test of aural comprehension rather than oral production.

## Testing Communicative Performance

Tests of communicative performance are quite different in nature from tests of linguistic competence. Unfortunately, in the past, the latter have been the only type of test used for all aspects of oral production. As a result, teachers often expressed surprise that a student who could obtain good marks on tests which assessed individual concepts could not function in a communication situation in real life. For that reason, it is essential that the students' ability to use the second language for communication be evaluated. As a result, such tests should resemble communication tasks in real life as much as possible.

In real life, the unfolding situation tends to create the 'plot'. Therefore it is essential that our test items provide the student with the plot, leaving him free to concentrate on the message that must be conveyed. If we ask him to create the plot as well, we are in fact testing creativity which is a fairly high-level skill. In other words, what we are really attempting to do is to simulate real life in our test situations. One immediate effect of this will be that the students' answers will not be quite as predictable as was the case in tests of linguistic competence.

## Types of Communication Tests

Communication test items may be divided into two basic types: those which merely require the student to tape record his response for later analysis and which, as a result, require no particular linguistic skill on the part of the person operating the tape recorder, and those which demand an evaluator who must be present during each individual test, since he or she will be one of the participants in the exchange. This person need not be a teacher; an aide, a skilled adult, or a competent senior student can all fulfill this role.

One important fact to notice with respect to these tests is that they cannot be administered in group situations unless a language laboratory of the audio-active type is available. Even if such a laboratory is available, some of the types of test items described below must still be carried out on a one-to-one basis.

Communication tests include the following kinds:

1. Provide captions for a picture sequence. The sequence may either tell a story or represent a dialogue.

2. Produce the two sides of a conversation by following an algorithm (diagrammed plot) or picture sequence of the conversation. (This can be done in pairs.)

3. Carry out an assigned task.

4. On the basis of a story or picture take the role of one of those involved.

5. Interview a person who has been given a 'canned' biography in advance

in order to give some control over the content.

6. Describe an event for someone on the basis either of a story or picture. Assume the role of one of the participants.

7. Act as a translator between two people who do not have a language in common (one person may be on tape).

Testing Communicative Performance - Picture sequence narrative

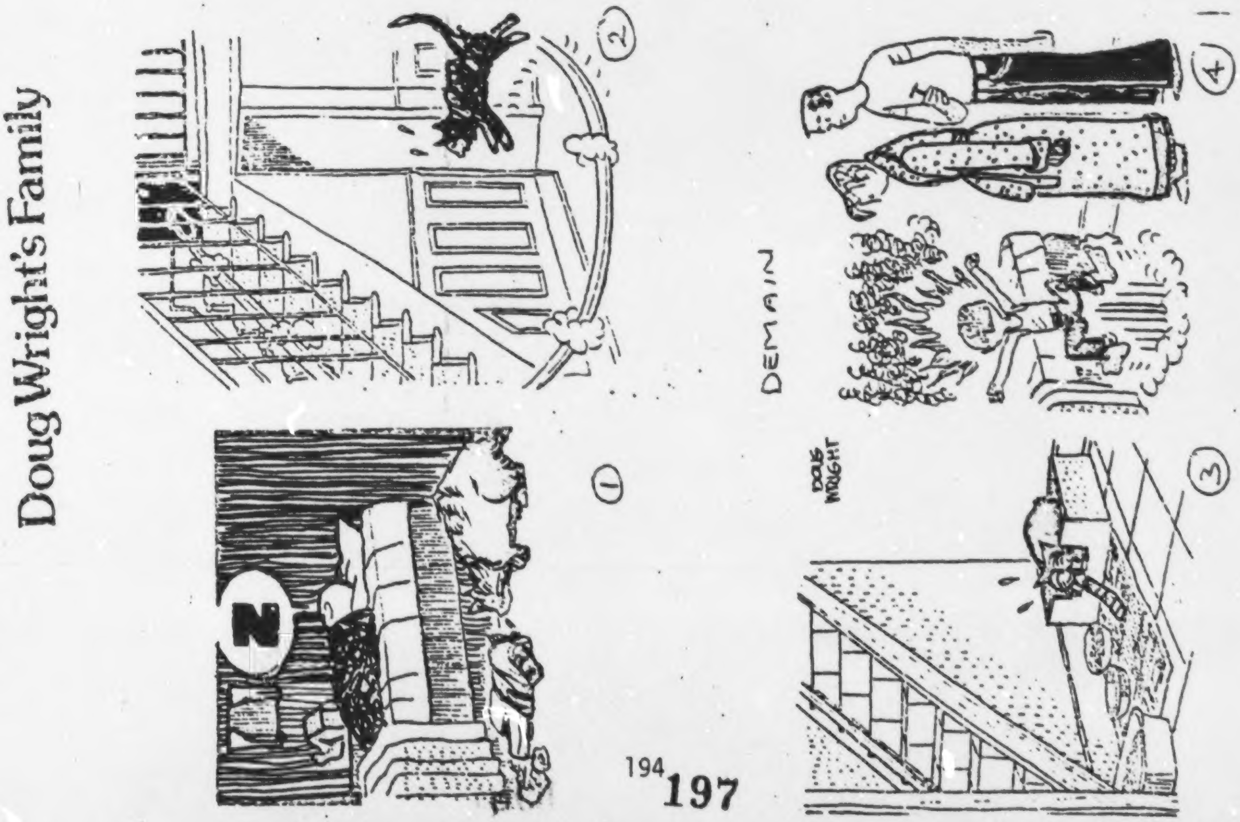
The Doug Wright cartoons carried in the Edmonton Journal's weekend edition provide an excellent source of such test items. A book of these is available from Montreal. They have the great advantage of having no dialogue that must be erased. Where similar cartoons with English dialogue are used, a fluid such as 'liquid paper' will remove the print without damaging the cartoon.

The following example may be used in several ways:

1. The student may be asked to tell the story contained in these pictures. (narrative)

2. The student may be asked to tell the story from the point of view of the cat.

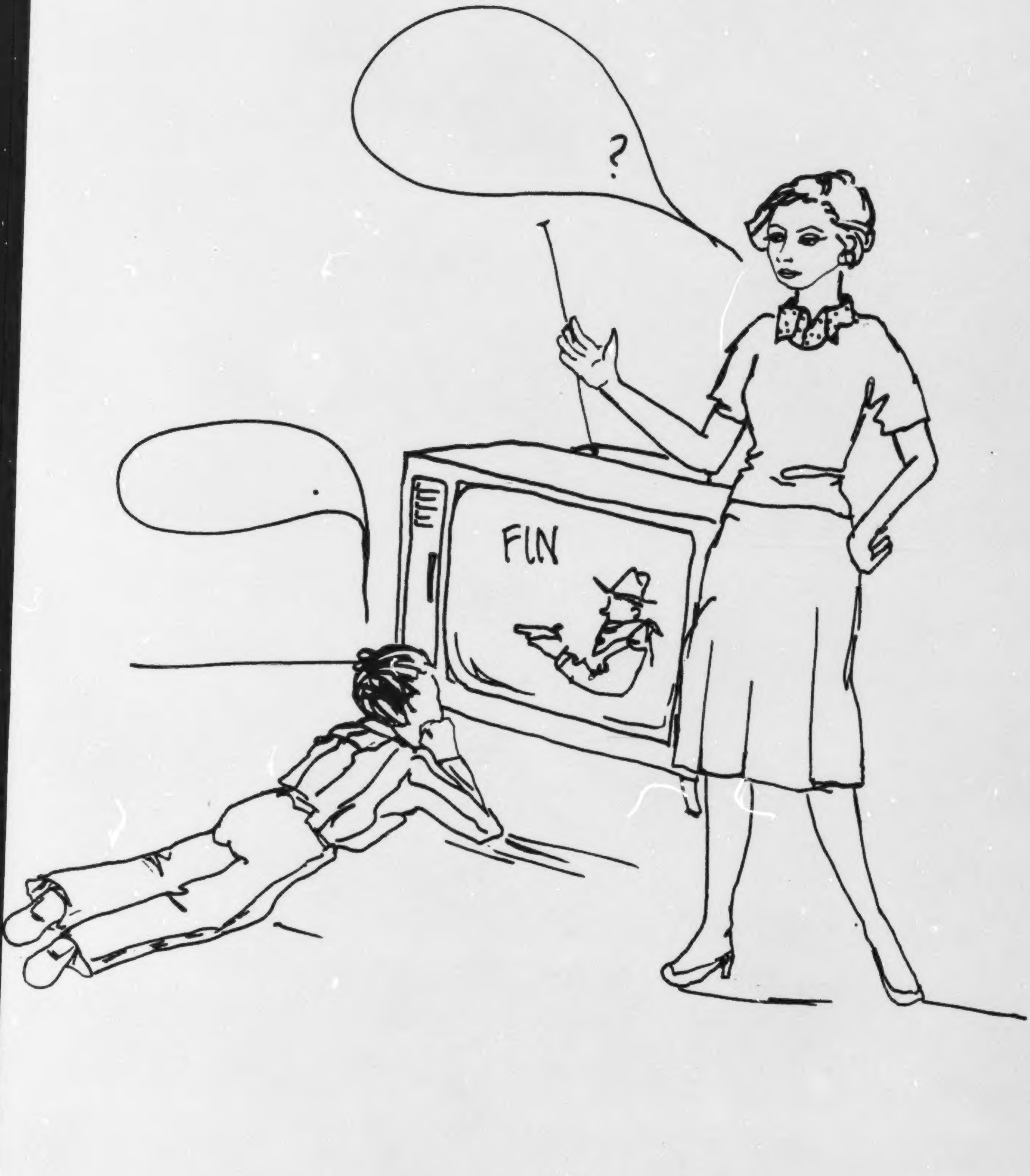
3. The student may be asked to tell the story from the point of view of the boy.



Testing Communicative Performance - Dialogue stimulus

In the picture on the following page the student is given an indication of the flow of the dialogue. Here he is asked to produce a question and its answer.

In this and in the preceding test item, it is important to decide how the student's answer will be evaluated. Since this is a test of communication ability, even though the student may make mistakes it is important that he receive credit for conveying the message successfully. The problem for the teacher is to arrive at an acceptable level of error; i.e., how many mistakes may the student make before communication is hampered? It may be wise to distinguish between errors which affect comprehension on the part of the listener, and errors which do not. The student should be penalized for the first on this part of the test, but not for the second. If the student answer is tape recorded, these latter may form a separate score.

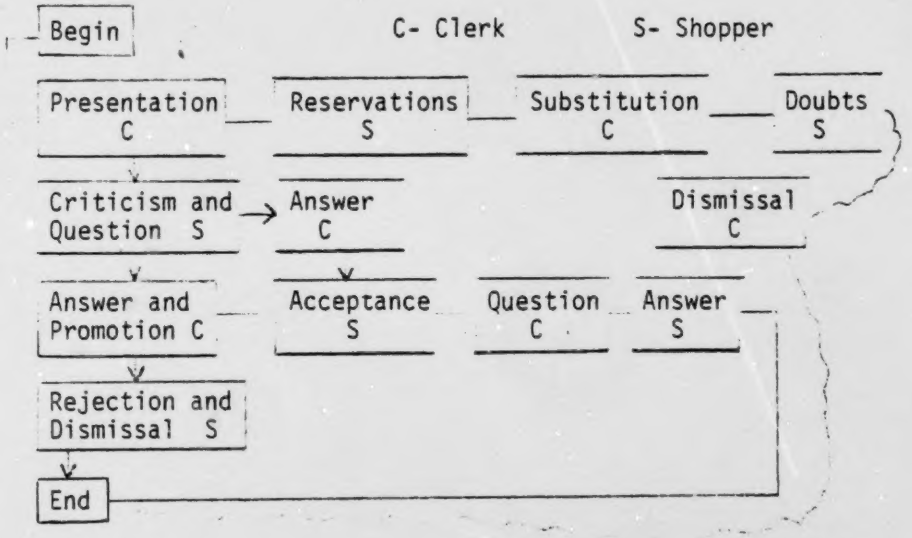

?
.
FIN

## Testing Communicative Performance - Conversation algorithm

The algorithm approach designed by Naomi Katz provides a means of supplying the student with the sequence for a very lengthy conversation thereby allowing him to concentrate on the actual content. In this approach either two students may participate at the same time, or a single student may interact with the examiner. It is important that the student have had practice with this approach in class in order to be able to follow the algorithm, a sample of which is given below. In a sense, this is a form of task completion, and the student should be given credit for successful completion of the task even when he has made errors which do not affect comprehension.

A further advantage of the algorithm as a stimulus for testing is that it may be used at different levels of linguistic sophistication, the student merely using simpler language. Alternatively, the evaluator may wish to give bonus points for imaginative responses or comments.

AN ALGORITHM FOR USE IN SHOPPING FOR A COAT - Naomi Katz


Begin
C- Clerk
S- Shopper
Presentation C
Reservations S
Substitution C
Doubts S
Criticism and Question S
Answer C
Dismissal C
Answer and Promotion C
Acceptance S
Question C
Answer S
Rejection and Dismissal S
End

Note - Other situations require different algorithms

## Testing Communicative Performance - Interview approach

In this type of test the evaluator is given a carefully prepared biography, and the student is required in a fixed period of time to elicit as much of this information as possible from the evaluator. The student's comprehension of what the evaluator says may be checked in one of two ways:

i) the student must repeat in English what he or she has been told.

ii) the student is allowed to take notes and then to prepare a résumé in French of what has been said.

Testing Communicative Performance - Interpreting

In this type of evaluation, a tape recorder acts as the person who has information to convey. The student acts as interpretor by providing this information in French to the evaluator. The opposite approach may be used: i.e., the tape recorder speaks in French, and the student gives the information in English. Obviously, this latter is a test of aural comprehension. Assuming that the tape has been carefully programmed, the student may even be asked to put questions to the tape. The answers are then conveyed to the evaluator. In the ideal situation, the tape would be replaced by a person, observing that there is some risk of non-verbal cueing. The student receives credit for every point of information that he is able to put across to the evaluator.

## TESTS OF READING

Reading tests are basically of two kinds, reflecting the two major subdivisions in the process: decoding (or word recognition), and reading for meaning. These parallel to some extent tests of linguistic competence and tests of communicative performance at the oral level.

### Testing Reading - Decoding

Decoding tests are essentially recognition tests, i.e., tests of the student's ability to recognize in a written form words which he has already encountered in an oral context. The following are some examples of these tests:

1. Testing for words which rhyme: i.e., sound-letter correspondence.

Directions:- In each group of words given below, there is one word which, when read aloud, does not rhyme with the other two. In the space on your answer sheet which corresponds to this question, circle the letter which corresponds to the word which does not rhyme, e.g.:

o. épicier, épais, trouvez
a b c

0. a [✓ b] c

2. Simple vocabulary recognition.

    a. In this test item the student is asked to complete the sentence by choosing the most appropriate word.

    Le soldat a tiré son sabre (a) de verre (b) de pierre (c) de fer.

    b. Here the students are asked to find the item which is not of the same category as the other two. In some ways this is an intelligence test. There is also the problem that their criteria for rejection and the teacher's may not be the same. In the sample given below, for example, they might reject 'chien' on the grounds that it ends in a nasal and the others do not.

    (a) un chien (b) un chat (c) un chou.

    c. In a more elaborate test, the students are given a series of vocabulary items in column A and are asked to find the appropriate definition for each word in column B. In this type of test item it is essential that there be more definitions in column B than words in column A to eliminate guessing.

Directions:- For each word in column A find the best definition in column B. In the space on your answer sheet opposite the number of the word in column A write the letter of of the definition from column B which is most suitable. For example:

| A | B |
|---|---|
| 0. un fauteuil | a. une grande salle |
| | b. une chaise avec des bras |

'b' is the best definition, so you would mark your answer sheet as shown below:

0. b

Testing Reading - Reading for meaning

1. In tests of reading for meaning reference should be made to the tests suggested for aural comprehension involving understanding, since the principles are similar. An example is the statement or short passage followed by one or more multiple choice questions such as the following:

> Mon frère est très indépendant. Il avait autrefois une petite ferme à la campagne dont il était très fier. Il y a six ans cependant, il a pris la décision de vendre ses terres pour chercher un emploi en ville.

0. Dans ce passage, le monsieur dont on parle

a. est fermier. b. est pauvre. c. ne travaille plus à la campagne.

2. In a simpler form of this type of test the student merely reads a statement, then states whether or not it is true, e.g.

L'éléphant parle bien le français. V F

(Beware of children who were brought up on the Babar books.)

3. In another type of item, the student may be asked to complete a sentence by choosing the most appropriate ending, e.g.

Il lui a demandé son nom et le garçon (a) le lui a donné.
(b) me les a données.
(c) ne l'a pas cherché.

4. A variation of the previous question is one in which the student is given a variety of stems and endings, and asked to match the various parts. As mentioned earlier in connection with a vocabulary recognition test item, there should always be more items in column B than in column A.

Directions: - From column B select the ending which most suitably completes the sentence begun in column A.

| A | B |
|---|---|
| a. Comment est | 1. le livre? |
| b. Oû | 2. ça va? |
|  | 3. vas-tu? |

Testing Reading - Constructed answers

1. In the traditional test item of this kind the student is asked to read a passage silently, then to answer in written form questions based on the passage. The obvious disadvantage of this type of test item is the amount of time which it takes to mark. There is a more serious problem, however, in that while the student may understand the question, and perhaps even the passage itself, he may not be able to put a sentence together in written form. This disadvantage must be weighed against the fact that the student in his answer will reveal the extent of his comprehension of the story assuming that he is in fact able to express himself.

2. An alternative form of the test item just described is one in which the student reads a passage, then gives either an oral or a written summary of it.

Testing Reading - Cloze tests

One of the more recent approaches to reading comprehension, and one which lends itself to objective marking, is the cloze test. In this type of test a passage is selected at the student's reading level, and then every nth word (i.e., every fifth or every ninth word) is deleted and a space left. The spaces are numbered or lettered, and on his answer sheet the student is asked to write in the missing word. It is impossible to do this type of test without a thorough grasp of the content, assuming of course that a good passage was selected.

The following is an example. The only precaution that should be taken is to ensure that there are sufficient clues available to allow a person to indicate the appropriate response. With these tests, it is especially important to ask a French-speaking friend to check the test to ensure that it is, in fact, possible to provide an appropriate word.

La dame qui l'a vu lui a ____1____ son nom. Pierre ne voulait pas

répondre parce___2___ il avait peur d'être grondé par sa ___3___ maman à son retour. Jouer au baseball c'est ___4___ bien, mais casser une vitre ne l'est ___5___ . Les autres garçons qui jouaient avec lui se ___6___ sauvés à toute vitesse. Maintenant, il y a seulement Pierre ___7___ regarde le visage de la dame enragée. Même ___8___ il a peur d'être grondé il lui ___9___ son nom. Heureusement la dame regardait le jeu ___10___ garçons. Elle sait que Pierre n'est pas le coupable.

(In this case, every ninth words has been omitted).

# TESTS OF WRITING

Tests of writing may be divided into two main types: demonstration of specific knowledge (linguistic competence) and the ability to communicate in written form. The first type includes such things as accurate spelling, verb forms, adjective and participle agreements, as well as an overall accurate use of syntactical forms.

## Testing Writing - Linguistic competence

The following are examples of this type of test:

1. Verbs - isolated forms

Directions: - Mettez les verbes suivants au temps et à la personne indiqués.

1. S'appeler au présent tu ______________
2. Venir au futur nous ____________

2. Verbs - in context (These are the same except that the student must determine the tense required from the context. Thus there should be two points: one for the correct tense and the other for the correct form.)

a. Directions: - Mettez l'infinitif souligné au passé composé ou à l'imparfait selon le sens.

Pendant quelques jours je voyais les deux 1.________
oiseaux qui (aller) (1) et (venir) (2) 2.________
occupés à faire leur nid.

b. Directions: - Mettez le verbe entre parenthèses au temps convenable selon le sens de la phrase:

1. Hier soir, ils (aller) au cinéma. 1.__________
2. Demain ils (aller) au lac. 2.__________

An important point that should be noticed is that in item 1 the student was given very precise instructions as to the verb form required. As a result, no comprehension of the total situation was necessary. In the two examples contained in number 2, however, an understanding of the passage is required. As a result these two items test both reading comprehension and syntax, and care should be taken to ensure that the vocabulary level is well within the student's ability.

3. Spelling Tests

   a. The student is asked to fill in the missing letters in a word.

      e.g., t_l_phone.

   b. Dictée based on material which he has been asked to study for this purpose.

   c. Dictée based on a story which he has not previously encountered but which contains no unfamiliar material.

4. Vocabulary mastery

   a. Write lines from familiar dialogues given the first line as a stimulus.

      Es-tu l'aîné? Non, _______________________________

   b. Filling in missing words in sentences not previously encountered.

      e.g., J'ai déjeuné____bonne heure et maintenant je vais_______ jardin zoologique.

      (This resembles the cloze test already encountered in reading. While the items in the example given are fixed, in a true cloze-type test of this nature it is possible that more than one item might fit the slot, and teachers should keep this in mind when preparing scoring keys.)

5. Morphology and syntax

   a. Word order and participle agreement. The student is instructed to begin the new sentence as indicated and change the underlined words to pronouns. e.g.,

      Vous avez vu les Dupont à la gare? Oui, je________________

   b. Agreement. The student is instructed to substitute the word in brackets for the underlined word in the sentence and to make all other necessary changes. This looks innocent, but.....

      e.g. Celui que vous avez acheté est plus joli que le mien. (Celle)

## Written Tests of Communicative Performance

Many of the tests listed under Oral Communicative Performance may also be used as items for tests of communicative performance in written form. In addition to these there are also the more traditional formats such as letter writing and paragraph composition. However, before these somewhat more difficult types are attempted the student needs practice in writing in more controlled situations, and the test formats which are employed should reflect this practice. These include formats such as the following:

1. At the simplest level the student may be asked to complete a sentence given on half of it. The level of the course will determine the degree of sophistication required in the answer. For example, the student might be given the following:

   ________________________________prépare le dîner.

   Possible answers might be as simple as 'Maman' or as complex as 'Ce gros monsieur, là-bas, qui est le chef de cuisine.'

2. The student might be given a model sentence and asked to write a new one based on the same structure but with different vocabulary. e.g., Given Marie, qui est la soeur de Pauline, est arrivée de Paris.

   Using this as a model, the student might write:

   Jean, qui est mon cousin, est allé à Londres.

3. At the paragraph level, the student might be given a paragraph describing winter, and asked to describe the same setting only with summer as the focus.

## Written Tests of Communicative Performance - Picture-based tests

Each of the items described above contains an element of control. In longer sequences, other ways of controlling the student's production include providing a series of pictures such as the Doug Wright cartoons contained on page 38. With these as a guide the student has the advantage of having a plot to follow (although at the upper levels the provision of a plot is itself a testable item) and thus can devote his or her entire attention to the problems involved in sentence construction and spelling.

## Marking Written Work

In test items where the emphasis is solely on accurate spelling or on provision of adjectival agreement, there is no problem: either the item is correct or it isn't. Problems begin to occur when more than one skill is involved. Tests in which the student must determine the correct tense and also spell the verb form correctly are a case in point. Here two separate marks should be given: one for spelling and one for tense. (Obviously the student will not get a mark for correct spelling if he has the wrong tense, but he can get a mark for tense even if the spelling is not totally correct, as long as it is clear what tense was meant.)

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Many of the test items on the previous pages were taken from tests prepared some years ago by Jim Jones of the Edmonton Public School Board when he taught at the High School level.

The real problem comes in tests involving composition where many factors are involved. The approach that should be used here, in order to provide some measure of objectivity, would be to provide separate scores for each of the following: spelling, length, number of grammatical inaccuracies (noting that both these and spelling mistakes will be more frequent in proportion to the length of the work) and some provision for creativity. The student who writes a long composition and who will make more mistakes should be allowed a certain number of errors per hundred words 'free', or his next essay or composition will be both much shorter and less interesting.

Since the marking of written work is a very time-consuming business it is suggested that such testing be carried out during the normal class schedule, rather than as a part of the formal term-end and year-end examinations. This gives the teacher more time to arrive at a fair assessment of the student's performance.

## TESTING CULTURE

As was the case with the language skills, here, too, there is a difference between asking a student to recognize a concept and asking him to state it. Put in other words, there is a very real difference between asking a student to judge whether a statement on an exam paper is typical of a given culture or not, and asking him to describe in his own words a given culture's approach to some aspect of daily living. The former is obviously much easier than the latter.

A third aspect involved in the testing of culture is the one mentioned earlier, that of determining student attitude to those who participate in a given culture.

One of the problems involved in teaching and testing culture is to avoid stereotypes. Tests of culture which examine pure factual knowledge, such as the following, tend to encourage a stereotyped approach:

When French people meet, they........

The following sample questions attempt to avoid this problem.

1. Directions: Say whether the following statements describe conditions which you are likely to find in European French culture.

   a) French people frequently invite visitors into their home.

   b) When French people meet during the day they shake hands.

2. **Directions:** The following question describes a situation which exists in our society. What is the corresponding situation likely to be in France? Describe the similarities and differences.

a) When you travel by bus across Western Canada and the United States you would most often travel on buses belonging to the same company.

b) In a hotel in Canada, if you are from the United States, all you would have to produce is some form of credit card or other identification.

3. **Directions:** Describe how the celebration of New Year's Eve differs in a French community from an English one.

4. **Directions:** Tell briefly why each of the following persons or things is important:

a) Mireille Mathieu

b) Le Parti Québécois

c) Le Carnaval

5. Another test format uses a five-point Likert scale and has the advantage that it may be carried out using a standard IBM answer sheet or similar answer paper. An example of this type of question is given below.

**Directions:** You will be asked to read some statements, then indicate your own reaction to them by circling one of the numbers below the question. For example, you will read:

The early history of French Canada contains many stories which tell about the bravery of the early settlers.

and you would circle the appropriate number below:

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | No opinion or don't know | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

### Testing Culture - attitude assessment

As mentioned earlier, another aspect of cultural testing has to do with determining the attitude of students toward the population whose language and culture they are studying. Such attitudes are most readily assessed by means of a format similar to that shown in the previous test item. (For a suitable instrument, the teacher should consult the tests of cultural attitude prepared by Dr. Gardner and his colleagues at the University of Western Ontario.)

The following is an example of the type of question that might be used. For obvious reasons, the question, while typical of those found in the Gardner-Smythe Test, is not taken from it. The directions are the same as for the previous test item.

French Canadians have contributed a great
deal to the development of Canadian music.

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | No opinion or don't know | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## TESTING, GRADING, AND REPORTING

Ideally, testing should take place on a continuous basis throughout the term or year. In addition to the major tests which mark the transition points between levels, there should be both shorter tests and frequent quizzes to ensure that teacher and student are aware the moment that a learning breakdown takes place for whatever reason.

Once the tests have been administered there remain at least four important steps to be taken.

1. The tests have to be marked.
2. The marks must be stored and analyzed.
3. Parents and students must be informed as to the student's progress, and the latter given some detailed feedback as to problem areas if any.
4. Errors must be analyzed to determine whether they are individual or group errors in order to determine the appropriate remedial action as well as to ensure that steps are taken to prevent the same problem recurring the next time around.

### Marking the tests

At this point, the section entitled 'Marking Written Work' on pages 161-62 should be re-read. While the discussion there is about written composition, the point about attempting to isolate specific skills for the purpose of marking is applicable to most test items involving more than one skill. A good rule might be to mark only one skill at a time. One way in which this can be done is to have the student use a tape recorder to record a fairly lengthy speech segment (two minutes at least). This recorded sequence can then be marked for a variety of points, one at a time. For example, a two minute description of a picture can be assessed for 1) vocabulary, 2) phonology, 3) complexity of sentence structure, 4) overall fluency. Obviously it would be impossible to carry out any reliable marking of all of these while listening to the student in the test situation, that is, if one wishes to be fair to the other students.

### Continuous assessment and record keeping

One solution to the marking load at the end of the term is to carry out a continuous assessment of those skills which require a great deal of marking time. Essentially this means that the detailed goals of the program are listed, and as each student demonstrates that he or she has achieved a specific goal, the fact is entered on one or other of the two record-keeping forms shown below. While students should, of course, be informed as to what is taking place, care must be taken that this does not produce a high level of anxiety in the learning situation. A single comment at the beginning of the year is all that is necessary.

Continuous assessment might take place as follows. The teacher decides on a given day that he or she will pay particular attention to three or four students, while being careful to involve others in order not to focus undue attention on the ones who are being assessed that particular day. The student's grasp of a particular concept is shown on the record card either by a + or a - depending on what has happened. At the end of a unit, the teacher should have a clear picture of where each student stands in relation to the goals of the program. A further advantage of this system is that the student who is sometimes overlooked does not suffer, since the cards serve as insurance that no one is neglected. A point which should be made in connection with this approach to testing is that it works best with tests of linguistic competence.

| Unit 3 | Richards, Mary 8G |
|---|---|
| tu/vous forms 'er' verbs | + + - + |
| inverted interrogative | - - - Remedial |
| Ton, ta, tes | + + + + |
| use of 'Est-ce que' | + + + + |

If 3 x 5 cards are used, they can be marked fairly unobtrusively. In addition, when the student sees that his progress is being checked in a thorough fashion, he has greater motivation to work on specific problems.

If it is felt that the card system is not appropriate for a given classroom, an approach similar to that developed for Le français: écouter et parler might be used. Here all the students in a given class are listed down the side of a piece of cardboard and the goals of a specific unit written across the top. As the student demonstrates to the teacher's satisfaction that he has mastered a given concept, his name is checked off. While the picture given is not as detailed as in the previous example, at least there is less likelihood of an unpleasant surprise when examination time comes.

| Unit 4<br>Class 8F<br>Fr 10<br>1977-78 | 'avoir' pres. negative | Combien de.....y a-t-il? | Numbers 30-69 | 'en' (Il y en a ____.) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arat, John | | | | | |
| Budnik, Dennis | | x | | | |
| Conroy, Louise | | | | | |
| Denison, John | | | | | |
| Enderson, Marie | | | x | | |
| Firth, Louise | | | | | |
| Grant, Helen | | | | | |
| Helverson, Peter | | | | | |
| Ipswich, Henry | x | | | | |
| Jones, Polly | | | | | |
| Krasowich, Pieter | | | | x | |
| Leblanc, Richard | | | | | |
| Many Calves, Iris | | | | | |

*If the girls' names are indented as shown it is much easier to find them quickly.

## Reporting to Parents

For a mark in French to mean anything to a parent it is important that the reporting form contain information as to the specific goals of the program. Ideally, reports should be given at the end of each level, but it is important that the parent be informed about specific problems or attitudinal difficulties prior to this time. At all times, the parent and the school must collaborate to ensure that the student keeps up to date in his work. For this reason it is important that when assignments are made, the parent be informed as soon as possible if they are not completed. If this is not done, the school runs the risk of being asked why the school did not take appropriate action early in the year when the problem first became apparent.

The following format might be used at the end of a level:

### SUMMARY OF PROGRAM GOALS

Introductory Program

Minimum Level of Language Proficiency

Upon completion of the Introductory Program the student will be able to:

Student Progress in Subject

A 1. Understand comments, simple conversation, instructions and information based on sentence patterns and grammar concepts most common in spoken French.

B 2. Give and seek information on everyday topics, relate a simple incident, and make a description using the most common sentence patterns, grammar concepts and the vocabulary of 'le français fondamental, premier degré.'

A 3. Read aloud and understand anything that he can say.

B 4. Write with accurate spelling anything that he can read.

B 5. Describe in English or in French daily life in a French-Canadian or French family, including recreational activities and holidays.

Attitude Very Good [✓ Good] Average Poor Very Poor

Work Habits [✓ Very Good] Good Average Poor Very Poor

An interim form for use prior to the end of the level might be designed as follows:

| | Very Good | Good | Average | Poor | Very Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Listening comprehension | | | | | |
| Oral use of the language | | | | | |
| Reading | | | | | |
| Written work | | | | | |
| Cultural awareness | | | | | |
| Attitude to subject | | | | | |
| Work habits | | | | | |

Comments ____________________________________________

____________________________________________

____________________________________________

## Error Analysis

This is the last, and probably the most important step in our process. In terms of the model shown on page 123 this is the point at which we decide what are the weaknesses in learning which a particular student has demonstrated in order that we may then plan effective remedial action. If we find to our dismay that most students demonstrate the same weakness, then we must come to the conclusion that our teaching of this particular concept has been somewhat less than perfect, admit this quite frankly to the class, and try again.

There is another reason for carrying out an error count and this has to do with future use of the test item. If we are using the test as a normative test, then we need to know how effective each item is. If we are using the test as a criterion-referenced one, then the fact that a specific item is causing a great deal of difficulty would indicate either that the item was poorly constructed, or that we had not taught the concept adequately. In either case, normative or criterion-referenced, the test item should be entered on a card and some statement made as to its effectiveness for future reference.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

The book listed below is the most complete work in the field at the time of writing and should form a part of every modern language teacher's library. The work provides detailed testing approaches for each skill, together with many examples.

Rebecca M. Valette. Modern Language Testing, 2nd ed. rev.

New York, N.Y.: Harcourt Brace and Jovanovich, 1977.
(available from Longman Canada, Don Mills, Ontario).

The following works contain useful sections on testing.

Frank M. Grittner. Teaching Foreign Languages, rev. ed.
New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1977.

Kenneth Chastain. Developing Second-Language Skills: Theory to Practice, 2nd ed. Chicago, ill.: Rand McNally, 1976.